

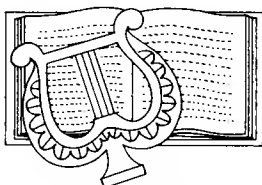
WILD AND WONDERFUL

BY
W. STEPHENS HAYWARD



AUTHOR OF "THE BLACK ANGEL."

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In Memoriam

Ruth Candler Lovett

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W. STEPHENS HAYWARD,

AUTHOR OF "THE BLACK ANGEL," "THE STAR OF THE SOUTH,"
"THE FIERY CROSS," "THE REBEL PRIVATEER,"
"RODNEY RAY," "LOVE'S TREASON," ETC., ETC.



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NOVELS AND TALES,

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "BLACK ANGEL."

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THE MUTINY OF THE THUNDER.
THE GOLDEN REEF.
DOCTOR ANDREW LORRIMER.
IDOL'S EYE.

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TALES OF THE WILD AND WONDERFUL.

EXCURSION TO THE NORTH POLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE British flag on the North Pole!

'The British flag can't be on the North Pole, because no one has ever been there to plant it,' I hear some one object. That's a mistake.

A sailor of the Greenock whaler, Bonnie Dundee, got up in those latitudes, and saw that old red rag of ours flying at the North Pole, and a few other things, strange and wonderful.

And now for the story.

• • • • • • •
Lat. 78° 35' 10" N.

September.

'There she blows!'

The hail comes from the foretopmast head of the Greenock whaler, Bonnie Dundee.

'Where away?' shouts the captain from the deck.

'Dead ahead, and a thundering school of right whales.'

'Come down,' cried the captain, in reply, and Hans Vanderchoker, the lucky Dutch seaman, who had sighted the school, came down on deck.

Instead of going to the forecastle, however, he went straight into the cabin, and there, with the skipper and mate, pretty nearly emptied the spirit case, a customary

proceeding when the look-out man at the masthead sights a whale or school.

Meanwhile the second mate and the rest of the crew had been getting out the two whale-boats, and the mate, Jack Adams, a broad-shouldered Northumbrian, said to the watchman—

‘Well, Hans, are you going to try your luck as harpooner? Last time, we lost the fish, a good ninety-barrel sperm.’

‘May I pe tamt if I lose te teffil tis time, if I follow her to t’ North Pole!’

‘I’m about as near up that way,’ remarked the captain a canny Scot, ‘as I care about going; so, if you and the whale mean to go, the Bonnie Dundee will be getting back towards Greenock.’

The skipper and mate laughed at this little jest on the part of the former, but Hans took it quite seriously.

‘Tere’s many a zruce vort sboken in shest, as your English provert says, and I’ve peen as near te Nort Pole as anypotty put zem tat’s tere.’

‘There!’ exclaimed the mate. ‘Why, you fool, nobody’s ever been there; so there can’t be any one there!’

‘Vell,’ said the Dutchman, solemnly, ‘tat’s a madder of obinion. I pelicf tere’s folk tere.’

‘Boats both ready, sir,’ said the second mate, coming in at this moment.

‘Right,’ said the skipper. ‘Hans Vanderchoken, harpooner, in the starboard boat, Jack Adams, helmsman, you and Sam Moseley in the other. Mind the whale doesn’t take you up to the North Pole,’ he continued to Hans.

‘I vish to te teffil it vout, for I mean to be up tere soon tay.’

In two minutes both the whale boats, each manned by

half-a-dozen oarsmen, were in full swing, racing each other due north.

While the two boats were rowing like fury towards their hoped-for prey, we will just explain, in a few words, the state of affairs.

The *Bonnie Dundee*, a Greenock whaler of 800 tons, had been tempted thus far north by an unusually fine summer, and the fact of the whales having also taken a fancy for going that way; but she had now come pretty nearly to the end of her tether.

For the last three days they had been among icebergs, which necessitated a constant and regular look-out night and day, and involved a good deal of danger.

To the north could be seen floes and solid pack-ice, interspersed with hummocks and gigantic bergs. In this dangerous neighbourhood, the *Bonnie Dundee* had been cruising, her captain feeling tolerably certain that there were schools of whales somewhere about, and in this he was not mistaken, for in four hours the port boat was seen returning, towing the huge carcase of a right whale.

The starboard boat was some four miles astern, towing no whale.

Of course, when the first boat came alongside all was enthusiasm and excitement, as the blubber fish was at least good for eighty barrel; but when the second boat came up under the stern of the *Bonnie Dundee* there were blank and pale faces, for not only was there no whale, but one man missing, and that man Hans Vanderchoker, their harpooner.

The sad story was soon told.

He had successfully harpooned his whale, and almost at the same moment stumbled and fell.

He was caught round the body by the whale line

rapidly running out, and dragged overboard, and down into the deep in a moment.

The boat was already within a few yards of an ice-floe, indeed, it seemed a solid field of ice, and there were bergs and floating lumps all around.

The line broke almost instantly.

They lay on their oars for nearly half an hour, but neither the whale nor the unfortunate harpooner was seen again. Then, with sadness and heavy hearts they rowed back to the vessel, less one of their number, a good seaman, and good shipmate, Hans Vanderchoker, the North Pole Dutchman, as they used in fun to call him.

And so, as is the fashion with whalers when a man is lost, the captain read the burial service over Hans Vanderchoker, although there was no body to be committed to the deep.

And after cutting up and tying down the whale, the Bonnie Dundee turned her prow southward. The ice, so far from showing signs of breaking up, closed in.

Icebergs to the east, icebergs to the west, even to the southward, and so she sailed back to Gretnock, nearly full up with whale oil.

But what about Hans Vanderchoker and the whale?

We must go north a bit with that Dutchman and the fish.

CHAPTER II.

I HAVE already stated that at the time the accident befell the harpooner of the starboard whale-boat, there was ice quite close.

The whale made straight for this ice, and then 'sounded,' that is, went down or dived, of course dragging the unlucky Dutchman after it.

As for Hans, the sudden plunge in the ice-cold water, and the strain of the rope round his body as he was dragged along, caused him to lose his senses as nearly as possible.

He thought his time had come, and breathing a prayer, resigned himself to his fate.

But in the world things do not turn out always as we expect, either for good or evil ; and so it proved in this case.

That which appeared to be a solid field of ice interspersed with bergs and hummocks, was not so towards the outer edge, but a number of detached floes of various sizes.

Beneath one of these the whale dived, hauling the now all but insensible Hans after it.

After going some two hundred yards, the great fish rose to the surface, in order to breathe, and the line slackening, Hans also came up to the top of the water.

He was not quite unconscious ; he had still sense enough left to know that his only chance of life lay in getting clear of the line by which he had been dragged overboard.

He had strength and presence of mind enough left to draw his sheath knife and cut the line.

He was now free of the whale, and soon felt the edge of an ice floe.

By a desperate effort, he managed to crawl up on this, and there lay for some minutes utterly exhausted, and more dead than alive.

Wet through with freezing water, lying on ice, half drowned, and sorely cut by the line, most men would have succumbed, and given up the ghost.

But Hans was made of tougher stuff. He had an iron constitution, and was always noted for his great power of enduring cold.

So, presently he struggled to his feet, and shivering with feeble, tottering steps, walked a little further from the edge of the ice floe.

He looked for the boat; but neither that nor the ship was in sight, as there were numerous hummocks and bergs in the way.

Nor could he tell even in which direction she lay; for it seemed that in the few minutes since his immersion, the ice had closed up and spread out.

‘It’s all over!’ he groaned. ‘No man can live wet through with ice-cold water, and without fire or means of getting warmth.’

The drowsy feeling—the sad precursor of death by intense cold—was just coming over him, and he was about to stretch himself on the cold ice, there to sleep the deep sleep of death, when a terrific roaring fell on his ears.

At another time he would have been alarmed, for he knew the noise to be caused by a bear or bears.

Advancing slowly and painfully towards a small iceberg, from the other side of which the sound seemed to proceed, he peeped round, and beheld a singular sight.

Two huge he-bears were engaged in desperate conflict, while a third, a she-bear, about which doubtless they were fighting, remained at a little distance quietly looking on.

Presently it was obvious one bear was getting the best of it—in fact, was overpowering the other.

They fought on their hind legs, tearing each other savagely with tooth and claw.

All at once the weaker of the two bears fell backwards, and the other, taking advantage of the opportunity, sprang on him, and before he could recover himself, seized him by the throat with his enormous fangs, and completely tore it open.

The fight was over, the vanquished bear ceased to resist, although the victor kept on viciously tearing at his throat and head.

In a few minutes he was dead, and the conqueror, apparently satisfied of the fact, marched off in company with the she-bear, his dreadful mouth, fangs, and all his breast dripping with the blood of dead bruin.

Hans waited till the two monsters, unconscious of his proximity, went off, and then he crawled to the dead body of the bear.

Perishing with cold, his limbs almost refusing to obey his will, almost blind, and at the very gates of death, he had some hope yet left.

He was a shrewd, as well as a brave, determined fellow, and in bruin's dead body he saw a chance of, at least, prolonging his life.

The carcase was, of course, warm, and would remain so for hours, and from the dead bruin's flesh he hoped to gain heat enough for his own body to save him from death.

Drawing his sheath knife, which had already done him good service, he cut open the breast and belly of the bear, and pulled out the inside.

Warmth was the first thing necessary. Before he could do any more he must get some heat into his own bones, chilled to the marrow.

So he crawled inside the body, still smoking warm, and there lay still. In the course of half an hour he was delightfully warm, and able to use his limbs freely.

He now got out of his singular oven, and set to work skinning the bear.

This he accomplished in about an hour, and then proceeded to make himself a huge cloak or poncho of the skin.

He succeeded admirably, and must have presented a

strange sight, with his head through a hole in a bear's skin—the hide the raw side out, the fur next his body.

However, this dress, of which he had robbed the dead bear, answered his purpose admirably.

By degrees his wet clothes steamed themselves dry, and he began to feel tolerably comfortable.

Now came the question how to regain the ship, or let his shipmates know his whereabouts, that they might come to his rescue.

His heart sank within him when, after clambering up to the top of an ice-mound, he looked out sea-ward, and beheld the *Bonnie Dundee* in the far distance, many miles off, standing to the southward.

They had given him up for lost, and were sailing away, leaving him to perish in those dreadful icy solitudes.

A bolder heart than his might well quail before such a terrible prospect.

Hans Vanderehoker thought for a few moments, and then a deep despondency came over him.

He could see no possibility of his being saved, nor the faintest glimpse of hope to cheer him.

There was but one chance, and that a very faint one.

The vessel might come back and discover him.

But this was most unlikely, as they had obviously entirely given him up.

Hans, besides being a brave man, was also a pious one, and, kneeling down, prayed for help and guidance in this his hour of need.

Feeling refreshed and strengthened after this, he made his way over the rough ice, round boulders, hummocks, and huge icebergs, going he knew not whither, but keeping in motion both for warmth's sake, and also because he well knew that there was no hope for him if he remained still.

The end of the day came, but no darkness ; for it was autumn time, and in these latitudes for some months of the year the sun never sets, merely dipping to the horizon to rise again.

He saw several seals and white foxes.

But these animals could be of no use to him at the present.

His most urgent need was food, and wood to make some sort of a shelter against the bitter cold.

If he could build any sort of a hut, and start a fire, the flesh of the dead bear would furnish him with food for a long time to come.

Presently he stumbled against a lump of ice, and fell.

Getting up again, his attention was attracted by a kind of blueish glitter in this ice lump which was quite clear—like glass, in fact.

Looking closer, he perceived to his intense astonishment that imbedded in this block of ice was a hatchet, handle and all complete.

His first thought was—‘ There have been men, white men, here before me ; perhaps they are still on the ice, or somewhere about with their ship.’

His next thought was to possess himself of this hatchet, which might prove a very useful addition to his only other weapon, or implement of any kind—the sheath knife.

He set to work, and with the sheath knife soon succeeded in digging away the ice, and getting possession of the hatchet—a large and heavy one, of English manufacture.

Shouldering this, Hans bravely marched on, saying to himself—

‘ The good Providence has not forgotten me. I have prayed to Heaven to guide me, and I am led straight to this axe ; presently I shall find something more.’

He walked on for several hours over rough ice; ice covered with snow; ice slippery and clear as plate glass; hummocky ice; ground ice, icebergs, some small, others rearing their vast green and white crests, as it seemed, right up to the sky.

All at once a tremendous surprise awaited him.

He was walking to the northward, under the lee of a huge berg, which towered a vast precipitous mass high above his head.

This iceberg was at least an eighth of a mile in length, and many hundred feet high.

There were dozens of other bergs in sight, and during the last hour a commotion was apparent among these monsters of the Polar sea.

It appeared that some force was acting on the whole ice-field—wind, current, or some other power—for the ice heaved and groaned, and the icebergs swayed to and fro, slowly groaning and crackling the while, in a manner which seemed to threaten they would break to pieces.

Hans knew pretty well what all this meant.

The ice was breaking up, probably stirred by some warm currents, or the pressure of some other ice fields.

Just as he had come to this conclusion, and was wondering how it would affect his prospects, he came to the end of the big berg, by the side of which he had been walking, and rounded the corner.

It was then his eyes were greeted with a sight which caused him to cry out in astonishment—

A vessel lying close under the iceberg!

But such a vessel!

A vessel of glass, with masts, yards, rigging, all glass!

Such was his first impression, but by degrees he discovered that it was an ordinary wooden vessel, a brig,

coated completely with ice, as a twelfth cake is with sugar. There was a solid mantle of clear, transparent ice over her from stem to stern, through which her hull and spars could be plainly seen.

Hans was a man of thought and reflection.

‘This vessel must have been here a long time,’ he said to himself. ‘She has been frozen up, and in the course of months, the fog, and mist, and rain, which collected over her froze, layer after layer, until she is quite covered, as I see her. Her crew have left her, or are all dead, that is certain.’

He wasted no more time in speculation, but went to work, and with his axe began hewing away at the ice, so as to get at the wooden hull of the brig.

In a couple of hours he had cut away the ice down to the bulwarks of the ship for a space of about a square yard and a half.

Next he chopped away at the bulwarks, then at the ice on deck ; and having got to the bulwarks, he soon cut a hole through the deck, so as to be able to gain access to the hold.

By this time there was a considerable quantity of chips lying about, the fruits of his work. The last wood he had been chopping at, that of the deck planks, was perfectly dry, and there was besides a good deal of pitch and cakum in the seams.

He had a flint and steel fortunately (matches would have been utterly spoiled by his immersion), so he at once proceeded to build a fire on the ice by the side of the vessel, close to where he had cut the hole.

He succeeded to admiration, and, in an hour’s time, was able to warm his limbs, and perfectly dry his clothes by the blaze of a good fire.

He had taken the precaution to bring away with him both bear meat and fat, and soon broiled himself a steak, and ate it.

For water he was content with snow, and after this rude meal, felt refreshed and grateful.

‘Providencee is very good to me,’ said Hans, piously. ‘I shall return thanks ;’ and then the stout-hearted Dutchman knelt, and returned thanks for past favours, praying for more.

He soon set about exploring the ship. He had got access to the hold, but it was dark, so he had to rig up a lamp of some kind. This he managed by means of a tin pannikin he saw imbedded in the ice, and dug out, using some strips of cotton from his shirt for a wick, and melted bear fat for oil.

The between-decks was nearly empty; but on looking into the lower hold, his heart beat high with hope, when he perceived black lumps down there.

Coal !

More precious to him in his then position than the most splendid diamonds. He had now fuel, both coal and wood, and had found a vessel already to his hand.

It was true she was frozen up, but then, perhaps, it might be possible to free her from the ice, or it might break up of itself.

Proceeding to explore the deserted brig, he made his way to the cabin up through the deck.

The cabin door and windows had been open, though now they were quite closed up by ice.

Fog, mist, and damp had also penetrated, and condensing on the table, deck, bulkheads, everywhere, had frozen, and covered all with a coat of ice, just the same as the hull of the brig, only thinner.

Hans saw a paper and books on the table.

He proceeded to cut away the ice, so as to get at this paper. This was what he read—

‘Brig Ajax, 25th October, 1864. Frozen up here in lat. 74 N, since end of August. Seeing no chance of getting her free, and the winter coming on, the captain resolved to abandon her with the crew, and drag the boats over the ice on sledges to the open sea, where we hope to fall in with some vessel, or make land. The summer failed us suddenly, and early cold setting in with a vast quantity of drift ice and bergs from the north, we were caught, and hopelessly frozen in. Should this paper ever be found, and we, the captain and crew, never be heard of, it is requested it may be forwarded to the owners, Messrs. F. Allan and Co., Glasgow. We have fuel and provisions enough to last us till next summer, but the men dread to spend the winter in this awful climate, so we have decided to make for the open sea, about forty miles S.E., and trust ourselves to open boats. May the Lord have mercy on our souls!’

‘Ah! poor fellows,’ Hans said to himself. ‘I remember the brig. She sailed away from Glasgow on a whaling voyage while I was there, and was never again heard of till now. And her crew, they perished at sea. They, too, were never heard of.’

Hans now proceeded to make the ship habitable, got a fire in the cabin stove, broke the ice on the deck, bulkheads, table, and everywhere, and cleared it away.

And then, after some twenty hours’ unintermitting work, he got some blankets he found below, thawed them, dried them, and having made a fire, lay down by the stove, and slept.

His escape from death up to this time was almost miraculous.

First being able to cut the line, and get clear of the whale. Next the two bears fighting, and one killing the other so opportunely for him.

Next his discovery of the hatchet, and now his finding a vessel, frozen up, certainly, but with fuel, provisions, all he could want on board ; this series of incidents did indeed seem something miraculous.

He slept and dreamed that he had got the ship free from the ice—had sailed to the North Pole, and there planted the British flag.

We shall see in our next how far his dream was verified.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Hans Vanderchoker awoke from his deep sleep the fire in the stove was out, as also that which he had lighted alongside the brig.

The first thing he did was to start a fire in the cabin again, as everything depended on his maintaining a tolerable temperature in at least one part of the ship.

While moving about or at work it was possible to bear the cold—to keep the blood from freezing in the veins by stimulating the circulation ; but to sleep, or even rest for any time, with the temperature below zero, was not possible, without incurring the penalty—death.

He now set to work clearing the cabin of ice, a task which hitherto he had only half performed.

The iron doors in front of the cabin, and the door leading out on deck, were gone ; and, at the time he first came into the cabin, were completely blocked up with ice.

Having cleared this away, he found that the effect was to make the cabin colder than before, the outside air pouring in.

The skylight was also crusted over with ice, but this was so clear and pure as to admit light. So, under the circumstances, he set to work knocking down some of the bulk-heads, and proceeded to block up the door and window completely.

It was darker now, but there was light enough; and he found that, by keeping up a good fire in the stove, he could maintain the temperature in the cabin to a bearable point.

So well was he convinced of the absolute necessity of warmth, that, before attempting anything else, he thoroughly isolated the cabin from the exterior air.

The only way which he kept open to go out on deck was down into the hold, and up through the hole which he had cut in the fore part of the deck.

This most important affair having been accomplished, he turned his attention to other matters.

First of all he got up provisions and fuel in abundance; and then, having rigged himself out in the warmest clothing he could find, he began to think of the future.

Here he was, on board a vessel, with a fair supply of provisions and fuel, but fast frozen up.

And the terrible Arctic winter was coming on, when the thermometer sometimes fell to 40 degrees below zero—72 degrees below freezing point.

How was he to extricate the brig from the icy bed in which he was firmly fixed?

If he did not do so—and that pretty soon—before the severe cold set in, it would be impossible to do so that year.

And he would be compelled to spend months in those dreary, desolate wastes—a prospect which even the crew of the brig, though they had provisions, firing, and each

other's company, shrank from, preferring rather to risk a voyage in an open boat—an enterprise which proved fatal to them.

It showed, however, in what terror the wintry months of darkness in such latitudes was held by men who had the opportunity of judging.

Hans Vanderchoker had wonderful courage, strength, and a constitution almost as tough and hardened to cold as a Polar bear.

But even he shuddered at the dreadful prospect.

Nevertheless, it was necessary to face it like a man, and do all that a man might to extricate the brig, and save his life.

It seemed at best but a forlorn hope ; but Hans was not down-hearted.

He was by no means a fatalist, such as are the Turks and Mussulmen generally ; but yet he could resign himself to the inevitable.

The difference was, that he could and would make a hard fight against fate ; and, trusting to Providence and his own exertions, he very often pulled through.

‘The Great Spirit, ruler of heaven and earth,’ he said to himself, ‘has favoured me up to now. Who can say that I am not to be saved ? Who can say that this, instead of a misfortune, may not prove again a glorious triumph ? Did I not dream I was at the North Pole, and saw a flag planted there, right up at the top of the world ? Latitude, 0 ; longitude 0. And who knows my dream may not come true—and the name of Hans Vanderchoker be ever famous as that of the first man who ever got to the North Pole ?

‘Hem ! ah ! Yet that won’t do,’ he went on, resuming his self-colloquy. ‘That is, if my dream’s right ; for I

saw a flag there, and if there was a flag, some one must have been there and planted it. Well, anyhow I shall know something more about it. Perhaps it's Sir John Franklin and his crew, who have got up to the Pole and hoisted the flag. Perhaps they're up there, alive and well, but have lost their ship, and so can't get back. If that's a fact, how fortunate will be my coming up there with this brig.'

For, be it observed, Hans had somehow or other got a firm belief in his mind that he was destined to achieve something wonderful—the North Pole for choice.

So our friend, having made the cabin all right, refreshed himself by several good meals, and wrapping himself up as warm as possible, went on deck.

He had been over two days and two nights—fifty hours—at work in the cabin making the place habitable, and attending to other matters.

The wind-current, or whatever it was which had caused the pack-ice to grind and groan, and the bergs to sway and totter, as though going to topple over, had now ceased to operate, and everything was calm and still.

A frozen ocean, a clear sky, in which the stars could be faintly seen, a great cloud or mist, or fog-bank to the northward, and a drove of white foxes, met Hans Vanderchoker's gaze when he came out into the open air.

He went down on to the ice from the vessel, and going round the corner of the iceberg, looked back in the direction from which he had come.

Ice—ice—ice—icebergs—some green, clear, and shining ; others, a dead white ; others, again, of a darker hue.

Ice everywhere—north, south, east and west.

A vast plain of ice—with hillocks, little hills, small bergs, and vast mountains of ice !

Nothing but ice! A dead calm in the air—silence, solitude, desolation, and ice!

Obviously, he could do nothing towards freeing the ship from her present position, and getting her into open water, for there was no open water to be seen.

The whole expanse of ocean, so far as the eye could reach, was one great ice-field.

Hans was a prudent man, and did not venture far away from the brig.

The iceberg, under the western side of which she lay, was a tolerably large one, and also conspicuous enough; but he had been so many times deceived by the appearance of these ice-mountains, once in pursuit of a wounded seal, losing the vessel for a whole day, through making for the wrong berg, that he was very careful not to lose sight of this one particular berg.

For he knew when he was well off.

If the worst came to the worst, he thought he could live through the winter tolerably well on board the brig, with fuel and provisions; but should he get lost on the ice-fields, then his case would be, indeed, desperately hopeless!

So, after making a circuit of about a quarter of a mile, all round the berg, he returned.

He had seen a troop of white foxes before he left the brig; but, when he got back, found at least a dozen had ventured on board—probably attracted by the smell of the food he had cooked.

They scampered off sharp enough when he made his appearance; but it struck him that some of their skins might be useful to make warmer clothing than he had; also, that the flesh might prove an agreeable rarity in the way of diet.

He remembered seeing an old musket in the cabin, frozen in, and apparently useless from rust. But he decided that if he could find ammunition he would make it serve his turn, and so he did.

For, at the bottom of a big sea chest, he found four canisters of powder and a bag of bullets.

In a few hours the old musket was dried, scraped, and polished; the flint sharpened, and made fit for service.

And half-an-hour after that, two foes fell before the steady aim of the Dutchman.

The skins of these made him a warm jacket, and, as to the flesh, he got a good steak for supper, and pickled the rest—not in brine, but in ice.

He wanted more fox-skins, however, to make himself a complete suit of warm clothes; but the animals were artful, and carefully kept out of range.

Hans, however, meant having more skins, and set about making traps—an art he had learnt from the Esquimaux on some of his former voyages.

He succeeded in getting five more of the skins, which were sufficient to make him a whole suit—trousers, moccasins, and fur cap. The old bearskin he could now afford to use as a rug; and made himself about the most comfortable berth by the side of the stove, with fox-skins, bear-skins, and blankets, etc., that one can well conceive.

After this there was a week of inaction.

Calm, silence, solitude, and bitter cold.

Hans, however, a man of action, was not idle.

He busied himself clearing the deck and rigging of ice; and, day by day, the Ajax became more and more like a wooden ship, and less like a vessel of glass.

Then there swept down a hard gale from the north-east with blinding drifts of snow and hail, which compelled him

to keep the cabin; and then again came the grinding, crashing, roaring, and thundering of the ice and bergs, now all in tumultuous motion.

In the intervals of the snow-storms Hans went on deck, and there saw what might well make a brave man's heart quail.

The whole expanse of icefield was heaving and tossing—the icebergs swaying and rolling to and fro—some falling, others crashing together with a noise like the firing of cannon; jets of water shooting up, submerging the ice; and this wild and terrible scene accompanied by a dreadful grinding and groaning, as vast masses of ice, heaved by the waves' concurrence, fell and crumbled together.

But the great iceberg, and floe attached to it, in which the brig was frozen, was not much affected by the surrounding tumult and uproar.

It seemed as though this berg and ice were so vast and solid as to be able effectually to resist the onslaught of other and smaller masses.

At any rate, Hans, an awe-stricken spectator of the tremendous scene being enacted, beheld the ice breaking up in all directions. Icebergs oversetting and falling with a tremendous roar, and everywhere patches of open water appearing.

But still the brig remained fast, and the grand old berg, under the lee of which she lay, only acknowledged the fury of the storm, which had broken up and demolished the vast ice-plain, by slowly swaying to and fro like a lazy giant.

Presently it occurred to Hans that he saw more and more open water make its appearance, and that it would be a good thing to get the brig clear and afloat,

But how to do it?

That was the question.

There she lay—frozen in—firmly embedded in ice, some twenty yards from the base of an enormous berg, hundreds of feet above the surface—probably thousands beneath—millions of tons' weight of ice.

And on the other side of her, a hundred yards or so of solid pack ice, at least twelve feet thick.

He perceived, after a time, that this great berg and the surrounding ice to which the brig was fixed had got clear of all other ice, and was surrounded by open water, with only loose lumps and drift-ice floating about.

And there was no symptom of her getting clear. It seemed likely that thus frozen fast the brig would float about, attached to the iceberg, until again frozen in.

How to get clear? That was the question.

Hans thought and thought, and presently hit on a plan.

A desperate expedient, and one which involved the wasteful use of a most valuable commodity.

He chopped up all the woodwork of the cabin fittings, even part of the deck, and piled it all round the brig outside, at the distance of about a yard. Then he got some tar, melted it, and smeared it over the wood.

Next he used several cans of turpentine he found among the stores. Then, he laboured full ten hours, bringing up small sacks of coal on his back. Then more tar, and, lastly, set a light to it in several places.

The result was that, in a quarter of an hour, the brig was encircled by a blazing bonfire.

Hans, as he looked and listened to the roaring of the flames, began to think his plan had proved rather too successful, for the blaze enveloped and licked the sides of the brig as though bent on devouring her, and he himself was obliged to take refuge in the cabin—this time not from the bitter cold, but from the intense heat.

But, fortunately for our friend, though there was no fire-engine, the brig was kept wet by copious streams of water.

The flames leaping aloft, licked the spars and rigging, melting the ice and snow, with which they were covered, and so the brig was deluged by abundant streams of water.

Presently, when the fire had abated somewhat, Hans came out from the cabin, and beheld the brig's hull, decks, and rigging entirely free from ice, but soaked with water.

And looking over the side, he saw that the ice all around him was fast being converted into a basin of water.

'Tat is goot,' he said gravely to himself.

Then he went into the cabin, seated himself opposite to the stove, lit a pipe (for he had found some tobacco), and proceeded to think over affairs in general.

'Things are going on very well indeed,' he said to himself, as he calmly puffed at his pipe. 'I will be on the North Pole before New Year.'

CHAPTER IV

THE rumbling and groaning of the ice continued for hours ; but Hans, who by this time had become accustomed to it, took it very philosophically.

'Let them smash and groan as much as dey like ; so long as dey do not smash de brig, it is all right.'

But about four hours after he had lighted the fire an event occurred which considerably disturbed his equanimity.

Several times he had heard sounds not caused by the grinding of the ice, and all at once, to his astonishment and dismay, two enormous polar bears walked calmly into the cabin.

Now, Hans Vanderchoker, though a brave man, was

prudent withal ; so, beating a rapid retreat behind the mast, he dived down into the store-room, pulling the hatch after him. This seemed first to puzzle, and then enrage the bears.

They began to sniff about the place, and then, with sundry growls and roars, began scratching up the deck with their claws.

Hans, safely ensconced in the lazaretto, could hear their enormous paws thundering overhead, as they paddled about the cabin in the vain attempt to discover his retreat.

The bears, however, showed no symptoms of departing, and it occurred to Hans that this sort of thing would not do for a continuance, especially as the brig now began to swing in an ominous manner.

But the two bears, having taken possession of the cabin, showed not the slightest disposition to leave.

To and fro they wandered, sniffing, growling, and, it seemed, holding conversation together in bear language.

Several times they commenced scratching at the hatch over the store-room, down which Hans had prudently vanished, and he had reason to fear that they might, by their huge formidably-armed paws and great strength, destroy or tear off the hatch.

But, fortunately for our friend, it fitted tightly ; and evidently not understanding how to get it off, the bears gave up the task.

Still, however, it was sufficiently obvious that they were aware of his presence down there, and had made up their minds to make a meal of him.

Every now and then one or other of them would stop and sniff at the hatch, growling and snarling also.

Hans was now in a fix. He was anxious to come on deck to see the state of affairs, and what chance there was of getting the brig off.

But, of course, with two such formidable visitors in the cabin, it would have been little short of madness to have left his safe retreat.

When he went down he took the old musket with him, and was also provided with powder and ball ; but he by no means felt inclined to risk an encounter with two fierce and enormous polar bears, armed only with such a weapon.

For right well he knew that these monsters are scarcely ever to be killed by a single shot, even if wounded in the head. For so thick are their hides, and so dense and strong the bones of their skulls, that nine times out of ten a bullet will glance off, inflicting a wound which though not mortal, nor indeed sufficient to disable the animals, will excite them to the utmost pitch of fury.

Hans, after a bit, resolved to make his way along the hold, and gain the deck by the fore-hatchway, leaving the bears in possession of the cabin.

That they must be dislodged, and either killed or driven off he decided, and now began puzzling his brain as to how this was to be accomplished.

Taking his musket with him, which he had carefully primed and loaded with a big charge of powder and two balls, he went forward and clambered on deck.

He only showed his head at first ; and carefully keeping himself as much hidden as possible, contrived for a time to escape the observation of the two monsters in possession of the cabin.

The brig was now almost clear of ice, and floating in a sort of pool or basin formed by the fire around her.

The field of ice in which she had been embedded now showed signs of breaking up altogether and becoming detached from the huge iceberg, which rolled and tottered

in an alarming manner, threatening to topple over and overwhelm the little vessel.

The situation was a very critical one, and it was absolutely necessary for Hans to be able to keep on deck, in order to make sail, if necessary, see to the helm if she gathered steerage way, and otherwise keep some command over her.

"Well, here goes," said the plucky Dutchman, as he made his appearance on deck. "I shall do my best, and leave the rest to Providence."

The bears soon discovered him, either by sight or scent, and the pair of them came lumbering out of the cabin.

Hans had an idea that the report of the old musket might frighten them.

The only result of this was that the two white monsters came on a trot towards him, roaring and showing their terrible fangs.

Suddenly, a bright idea flashed across our friend's mind, and as the bears came within a few yards of him, and had reared themselves on their hind legs, as is the custom with these animals preparatory to attacking, he seized a can of turpentine which stood near the foremast, and made the best of his way up the fore-rigging.

Bears, though slow and clumsy, from their great size, are climbing animals, and both beasts immediately followed him, their enormous weight absolutely causing the mast to sway and totter as they clambered up the shrouds in pursuit.

Hans, much more quick and active than the monsters, gained the foretop long before them, and there stood calmly waiting their approach.

CHAPTER V.

THERE could be no question as to Hans Vanderchoker being a brave man ; but it must be owned that he felt just a little queer as he saw the two great monsters crawling up the rigging.

The way in which they showed their great fangs, and roared and snarled, was enough to make a man not of very strong nerve lose his presence of mind altogether.

Such, however, was not the case with our friend, Hans the Dutchman.

‘I ’xpects tem tefils is going to eat mc,’ he soliloquised. ‘Leastwise, they wants to ; but I tink I’ll stand ’em a bit yet.’

Hans had been so long sailing in English ships and in company with Englishmen, that he not only spoke, but generally thought in that language.

The two bears reached the futtock-shrouds, and, with gaping throats and dreadful roars, were just on the point of clambering up, when Hans thought it time to commence operations.

He stood at the edge of the top with the can of turpentine, from which he had already removed the bung, in his hands.

“A great pity,” he said, “to spoil two such tam fine skins—a great shame. But it must be done, or else those ’coons kill me and eat me up.”

With the words he poured the contents of the can over the two bears, dividing it equally between them.

It is to be observed that though he favoured them with a good dose of the fiery liquid over the head and eyes, and also let some fall into their gaping mouths, so as to give

them a chance of learning what its flavour was, he took care that the greater part of the contents of the can should fall on their hind quarters, which were thoroughly saturated.

Their roars of rage, as the turpentine caused their eyes mouth, and throat to smart, were terrible.

But this dose was not sufficient to stop the infuriated beasts, and the next moment they had put their huge fore paws over the edge of the top, and, using their tremendous strength, their bodies followed.

But Hans was too quick for them.

Seizing hold of the topmast backstay, he swung himself on to it.

"Not yet, my pretty poys, I isn't quite ready to be chawed up yet."

Then he allowed himself to slide rapidly down, and reached the deck in safety.

The bears were now, for the time at least, completely nonplussed ; and, if they could have thought, must have considered themselves two very foolish-looking quadrupeds indeed.

They walked round the mast in the narrow top, and, going opposite ways, met each other face to face.

There was not room for them to pass, whereupon the she-bear growled and roared terribly—doubtless, in bear-language, abusing her consort for having made a fool of himself and her too.

They were now in a pretty considerable fix.

There was neither room for them to pass each other nor turn round.

Consequently, growling and grumbling, doubtless swearing vengeance against Hans when they did catch him, they commenced to go backwards.

Hans was now, for the time, all right and safe from the

bears. But our friend knew that, as the beasts had been able again to clamber up, they would also manage to get down somehow.

And then he would be in a bad or a worse plight than before.

But he had ample time to make his preparations, which he went about in the most methodical manner.

First, he loaded the musket; not that he placed much reliance on the old weapon, but because he was a man who acted on this most excellent principle—

‘Never throw away a chance.’

After having loaded the musket, he took a look up at the top, to see how the two beasts were getting on.

They were engaged in lowering their huge carcasses back over the edge of the top, sterns first.

Now, it is always more difficult to descend than it is to ascend, as everybody who has experienced anything of mountain climbing must know well.

In the case of the bears, it was a task of the greatest difficulty to retrace their steps.

Were not the whole situation one of undoubted peril, it would have been in the highest degree ludicrous.

The monstrous animals hung to the top by their fore paws, their bodies dangling in the air, seeking to find the fore-rigging, up which they had come, with their hind feet.

But after a great deal of wriggling, grunting, and so forth, they accomplished it; and once having got a footing for their hind legs, their great strength and the enormous gripping power of their claws rendered the rest comparatively easy, and they commenced to descend slowly and cumbrously, for they had to look and feel behind them now.

In the meantime, when they were hanging by their fore

legs, their huge bodies swinging about in the fashion described, Hans more than once put the musket to his shoulder, and had half a mind to fire.

But he decided not to do so, having made other arrangements.

'Te tefil! no,' he muttered. 'I would pepper those 'econs fine, and maybe bring one down "whappo." But I'll fix te business more better as tat. I'll warm de rascals up!'

So he went into the cabin with a piece of plank, round which he had wrapped some oakum, and then smeared the whole with tar.

This was for a firebrand or torch, and admirably did it suit its purpose, for the instant he applied it to the fire in the cabin stove it blazed up furiously.

'Ah! dat will do fine. I'll scare tem tefils, I tink.'

As he walked along the deck, clad in his suit of skins with a huge fur hood over his head, the flaring, smoking torch in his hand, he did indeed look an extraordinary object.

The bears by this time had lumbered down the fore-rigging, and were close to the fore-chains.

Hans, who had not hurried himself, but gone to work quietly and methodically, was in plenty of time to receive his ursine visitors.

And the reception he gave them, though striking and fine enough in a pyrotechnic point of view, hardly pleased their bearships.

The moment they were within reach he quickly applied the lighted torch he carried to the hind-quarters of each.

Their fur, saturated with turpentine, was all in a blaze instantly.

Hans now started aft to be out of the way, and the

two bears, roaring with rage, fright, and pain, fell thump on the deck.

They then made a rush aft with fearful howls, almost mad from the blazing flames which enveloped them—blazed all around and over them.

In less than half a minute from the time he applied the torch, Hans Vanderchoker had the satisfaction of seeing the two monsters make a sort of a rushing tumble at the bulwarks, and scramble overboard, falling with a great splash into the pool of water which surrounded the brig.

‘Te tefil!’ said Hans to himself, calmly, ‘tey not come here to see me no more. Two lovely skins spoiled, though. Ah! what a pity!’

CHAPTER VI.

THUS far Hans Vanderchoker had succeeded to admiration in overcoming all obstacles and escaping from the most deadly peril.

All danger from the two bears was soon past, and Hans could calmly survey the scene.

Although, on tumbling overboard, they had fallen into the water, yet even this was insufficient to extinguish entirely the blazing flames.

Scrambling on to the ice, the fore parts of their huge bodies which had not been submerged still on fire, they rolled over and over, roaring most horribly the while.

Rolling thus the snow and ice, half melted by the heat of the fire, had the effect of quenching the flames, not, however, before nearly every scrap of fur had been burned from the bodies of the two animals.

They now presented a most wretched sight.

Wet, singed, of a dirty brown colour, and covered with

patches where the fire had taken strongest hold, they looked the most ragged and disreputable pair of bruises ever seen in those regions.

That they would never trouble Hans again was sufficiently apparent, for the instant the flames which tormented them were extinguished, they went shambling off at a trot, growling and snarling in a subdued manner.

But though Hans had got rid of these monsters, his troubles were by no means over.

The brig was not clear of ice, and he had before him the prospect of a terrible winter in those inhospitable and inclement regions.

Hitherto the sky had been clear, and the long polar night had not set in.

But shortly he might expect perpetual darkness, without one glimpse of the sun, which, in those regions, he well knew set early in November, not to rise again until near the middle of February or March—three months uninterrupted night.

For some time the wind had been rising, and it now blew a strong gale from the south-west, which hourly increased in violence.

Hans at once went to work, and did all that was possible by his unaided exertions to make the vessel snug, and to protect her against collision with the masses of ice.

The greatest and most imminent danger was from the immense berg near which the vessel lay.

This vast mass of ice rolled and tossed about, and occasionally great lumps would break off and fall, thundering down on the surface of ice and water by which it was surrounded.

In the course of three hours the gale seemed to have culminated.

The brig was now afloat, and the field of ice was being smashed up in all directions.

And, indeed, it seemed likely that what was lately a great plain of ice would soon be entirely disintegrated.

The gale was accompanied by squalls of snow and hail and snowdrift, which at times almost blinded Hans when he attempted to look out, and rendered it impossible to see beyond ten yards from the brig.

At times, however, the sky was perfectly clear, and Hans could see right away to the open sea which lay to the southward, and was rapidly encroaching on the pack-ice.

The scene about this time was one of awful grandeur, the effect produced by the collision of ice and the tempestuous ocean being tremendous.

The sea violently agitated, and rolling its waves against an opposing body, is always a sublime sight; but when, in addition, it encounters vast masses, also in violent motion, its effect is greatly increased.

At one moment it bursts upon these icy fragments, and buries them many feet beneath its surface; and the next, as the buoyancy of the depressed body asserts itself, it rises up, the water rushing from off it in foaming eddies, whilst every individual mass, working and grinding on its bed, contends with its opponent till one is either split and broken up, or heaved on to the other. And this sort of thing was going on as far as the eye could reach.

Presently the brig, which had been for a time sheltered by the iceberg, began to feel the force of the gale as the wind shifted more to the westward, and, rolling and thumping against the lumps of ice, every timber creaking and masts groaning, began to move slowly ahead.

Hans, seeing this, adopted a bold and courageous, though at first sight most dangerous course.

He had no sail set at the time, so ran aloft and lowered the fore-topsail.

This would, he knew, cause her to keep before the wind—the only course on which she would be at all manageable in such a tumultuous sea of ice and water.

But also the heavy gale blowing would force her ahead, and cause her to dash violently against the opposing barrier of loose ice.

This, however, he resolved to risk, relying on the obvious strength of the little vessel, and hoping besides that the ice-field would soon be entirely ground up and dispersed.

His object now was to escape as soon as possible from the dangerous vicinity of the great iceberg, which threatened every moment to topple over, and utterly crush and overwhelm the little vessel.

The brig at the time he loosed the topsail was in a basin of water and small pieces of ice, which were solid enough, however, to keep her nearly motionless.

When, however, the force of the wind was exerted on the sail, it was a different matter.

She at once commenced to forge ahead, gaining impetus each moment, and was soon sailing direct for the solid barrier of ice.

The moment of the collision with the main body was one of desperate anxiety to Hans.

He lost his footing, and was thrown to the deck by the shock, but scrambled up again as soon as possible.

The vessel staggered, and seemed to recoil, but the wind, still urging her forward, drove her within the margin of ice.

Continuing her onward course, bumping and pitching against the great pieces of ice, till more than once the gallant Dutchman thought her bows must have been stove

in, she penetrated some two hundred yards into the broken-up ice-field.

And here she stuck fast.

Scarcely had Hans satisfied himself of this fact, than a loud report, followed by a rattling roar like thunder, told him that something extraordinary had occurred.

CHAPTER VII

THE catastrophe which Hans Vanderchoker had some time expected and feared had come to pass.

The enormous berg, close to which the brig was frozen up when he first discovered her, had smashed up.

The rolling and tossing caused by the sea and the pressure of the wind on such a vast mass had caused a huge overhanging lump of ice, some thousands of tons in weight, to become detached.

This was accompanied by a loud report, and the great piece of ice went crashing and thundering into the sea.

This, of course, caused an alteration in the centre of gravity, and the whole mass of the berg which remained, after swaying and oscillating for some little time, toppled over.

This, with the fall of the great lump, of course created a tremendous commotion in the water and loose ice.

Hans hoped that the berg was far enough off for safety ; nevertheless, when he observed the enormous rollers which the breaking up of the iceberg caused to arise almost instantly, and the violent manner in which great slabs of floating ice were tossed about and dashed against each other, he wisely took to the rigging, mounting half-way to the maintop.

Scarcely had he done so than the great waves which had thus suddenly arisen were upon the vessel.

These waves were half water, half ice, and of course all the more dangerous for that reason.

The brave but cautious Dutchman had good reason to congratulate himself on the precautions he had taken.

The brig—stout little vessel as she was—was tossed about like a cork by the furious sea the smash-up of the iceberg had caused.

Great waves struck her—deluged her decks—threw her on her beam-ends, and almost overwhelmed her.

And not only was she swept by water, but the seas dashed great lumps of ice against her sides, bore them on to her deck, and altogether knocked the brig about in a most unmerciful manner.

Hans Vanderchoker had great difficulty in maintaining his hold, so great was the oscillation, and so violent the sudden jerks.

However, he did hold on, and gradually the fury of the swell raised by the fall of the iceberg subsided.

But it was some minutes before the water with which the decks were flooded poured off, and even then they were cumbered with lumps and slabs of ice of all shapes and sizes.

Hans found the state of affairs dismal, miserable, and discouraging enough.

The decks were covered with ice, which it was necessary to get rid of in order to render locomotion possible and life tolerable on board the brig.

He set to work at his task with a will. He was soon wet through and shivering with cold, and was forced to leave off in order to light the stove, which had been thrown over and the fire extinguished.

This was a task of the greatest difficulty, as all the wood on deck was wet.

Indeed, had it not been for the aid afforded by some tar and turpentine (a barrel of the former, and several tin cans of the latter having escaped destruction) it is doubtful whether he would have succeeded at all.

It was fortunate for him that it was not midwinter, and this for more than one reason. Had it been early in January, instead of October, the cold would, of course, have been intense—many degrees, perhaps forty, below zero.

To have worked among ice and water, which latter would, of course, be almost instantly frozen at such a temperature, would have been a matter of sheer impossibility; in fact, the result must have been death from cold in a very short space of time.

But, as it was, with a southerly breeze, the temperature was quite tolerable, notwithstanding the high latitude, and that the summer was over.

The sea, however, which had been warmed by months of perpetual sun, was above freezing point, and the temperature of the atmosphere was very little lower.

In a few months' time all this would be changed. In place of a bearable degree of cold, the thermometer not having, as yet, sunk lower than twenty-two degrees, or ten degrees below freezing, there would be intense, bitter cold, forty degrees, or even fifty degrees below zero, which latter would be eighty-two degrees below freezing point.

And, in place of a long spell of daylight, there would be one perpetual night, the sun never appearing above the horizon for a clear three months.

Had such been the state of affairs when Hans was cast upon the ice, it is not possible he could have survived, so he

had reason to be thankful things had happened as they had.

While Hans was lighting the fire, and warming and drying himself thereby, the brig continued to force her way ahead through the loose ice, going at the rate of about three miles an hour.

With the fore-topsail loosed, of course she kept easily before the wind, gaining, however, from starboard to larboard, as she came across floes or masses of floating ice.

Hans had neither the power nor the inclination to guide her movement in that ice-laden sea.

She could not be made to answer her helm, and the only possible course was to let her run before the wind.

And, indeed, the Dutchman was quite satisfied therewith.

He perceived that the ice became smaller and more broken up as the vessel progressed, and hoped that there was clear water, or, at least, passages in the ice ahead.

And so he warmed himself thoroughly, and saw that there was a big fire in the stove before he again set to work to clear the decks of ice.

This he ultimately accomplished in the course of an hour or so.

Meanwhile, the wind, which had abated a good deal in violence, blew steadily from the south-south-west, and the Ajax went grinding and thumping ahead, her progress, hour by hour, becoming easier as the larger lumps and floes of ice became more scarce, until, at last, the sea was only encumbered with floating ice, broken up and ground almost to powder.

It hindered her progress, but no longer endangered staving her bows in, and she forced her way through the ice-encumbered sea at the rate of fully four knots.

When night came on Hans Vanderchoker made himself as comfortable as possible, first having hauled the fore-topsai

as close as he could up to the yard, so as to expose less surface to the wind.

Should the necessity of taking in canvas arise, his only plan would be to cut it adrift from the yard.

Morning broke, and it no longer blew a gale—only a stiff breeze, and that still from the south-west.

The sea was by no means clear of ice, for there were great fields and floes all around. But these were not solid pack-ice, but as before, loose, and broken up.

And there were passages and broad channels between these, through which Hans was able to steer the vessel, for she now readily answered to her helm—in a measure, though, of course, he could not bring her broadside to the wind with only head-sail set.

‘This is all very well,’ soliloquised Hans.

‘The skiff goes along fine now—with the warm south wind behind her. But by-and-bye there must come more ice and winter, and hard frost; then I reckon we’ll be froze up for the winter. That is, if there ain’t a warm sea or land up at the North Pole. Ter teuffel! at this rate I reckon we’ll soon be there.’

And indeed it seemed likely that if the sea continued free from ice, and the wind held from the southward, that the *Ajax*, with Hans Vanderehoker, must indeed reach the Pole; for the brig was now running nearly due north, at the rate of fully 120 knots or geographical miles a day.

But such an eventuality Hans justly thought was hardly possible. There must be ice ahead; and, moreover, winter was coming on apace, and in little more than another month the sun would sink for a three months’ night.

We will now leave the little brig ploughing her way through an ice-laden sea, before the southerly breeze, and have a look at her later—that is to say, in the first week in January.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROZEN in, at midwinter, in the Polar Sea!

Such is the situation of the *Ajax* on New Year's Day, the first of January, 18—.

She lies in a little inlet of Table Island—the most northern known land on the globe.

Sheltered by high rocks and peaks from the south-east and westerly winds, the inlet faces the north, where nought is to be seen but a vast plain of ice. Ice—ice—ice—as far as the eye can reach.

When there is no moon at this dismal spot, there would be almost total darkness, for the sun had set two months ago, and will not shed his genial rays over these dreary inhospitable regions for two months more.

Oh! what a night!

A night of four months without break, and nothing to mark the time except a faint gleam to the northward at noon!

But for the reflection of the ice and the snow, the clearness of the atmosphere, and the bright glow occasionally thrown by the *Aurora Borealis*, there would be total darkness.

This island, where the *Ajax* has been set fast for nearly two months, lies a short distance to the northward of Spitzbergen.

It was not altogether choice which caused Hans Vanderchoker to choose this inlet or bay, or, indeed, the island at all, for his winter quarters.

The brig, after sailing for six or seven days before a southerly breeze, had run into a dense pack of more solid ice.

The commencement of winter was ushered in by an icy blast from the northward, and new ice was formed with wonderful rapidity.

The result was, that in a few hours the loose masses were firmly cemented together, and the Ajax was fast frozen in, in an immense field of ice, reaching in every direction to the horizon.

Shortly afterwards there again arose a southerly, or, rather, south-westerly gale.

But the ice was too firmly set, the winter too far advanced, for it to be broken up, and entirely disintegrated as before.

Nevertheless, an immense field from the south crashing against that one in which the Ajax was fast, broke off into huge pieces, floes from half-a-mile to more than a mile in diameter were crushed up at the edges, broken off from the main field, and set in motion.

The gale continued with storms of snow and drift, which compelled Hans to keep closely to the cabin; for the temperature now began to fall rapidly, and at midnight it was as low as thirty degrees below freezing point, or only twenty degrees above zero.

The force of the wind and waves, and the great field which had come up from the southward and fallen on the one in which the Ajax was frozen up, had set the whole mass in motion to the northward.

Though the sea was not to be seen, Hans could hear the roar of the waves miles to the southward, and was able to form an idea of the fury of the gale which now raged, but of which the brig, as she lay fast jammed up in the ice, felt but little.

So, slowly but surely and steadily, the Ajax was drifted away to the northward.

Past the dreary and inhospitable shores of Spitzbergen,

along the coast of North-east Island, until at last the northerly gale had done its utmost, and there came vast masses of ice borne by the current down from the pole.

Then there was an awful ice battle. The uproar, the crashing and grinding were deafening.

Huge masses, hundreds of tons in weight, were heaved up in great mountains by the gigantic forces at work, and it was expected every moment that the ice around would be burst up, and the little vessel overwhelmed, as had been many a good ship.

But the fury of the contending ice-fields exerted itself principally at the edges, and after a struggle—grand and awful to behold and listen to—lasting fully twelve hours, the great fields coming from the north gained the victory.

That in which the Ajax was frozen up was broken with floes, and the particular floe in which she lay, one about half-a-mile across, was driven violently into this inlet of Table Island.

Fortunately, she was near the centre of the floe, and so escaped entirely the grinding and crushing of the ice at the edges; and after the greater part of this floe had been broken up by the contact with the shore, and the rude shocks of other and larger masses, it settled down, and intense cold coming on the whole, was shortly frozen into one vast plain of ice, reaching, as Hans conjectured, from this little island to the North Pole itself.

“Ter teuffel!” said the Dutchman, philosophically. “Here I is, froze up hard and fast. I wonder what next!”

CHAPTER IX.

HANS VANDERCHOKER, though he had never been frozen up for the winter, as was now the case, was an old Arctic mariner, and in various whaling and sealing voyages had become familiar with ice and the intense cold of those regions.

He had made the acquaintance of all the animals—aquatic and land—which existed in those seas and on the bleak, inhospitable shores of Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, and Greenland.

The whale, the walrus, and the seal were all familiar to him.

And he had more than once been in danger from the fierce Polar bears, though never till now had he experienced so startling an adventure as this last.

White foxes and reindeers, too, he had seen, having shot the former and become tolerably familiar with the peculiarities of the latter intelligent and docile animal.

And, lastly, he had often come across the only human habitation of that inclement and desolate part of the earth—the Esquimaux.

But though Hans Vanderchoker was thus familiar with the 'Fauna,' and even the 'Flora' of the Arctic regions (for there is very rapid vegetation during the short period of summer warmth), and also with the peculiarities and ruinous phenomena relative to the ice, icebergs, and glaciers, the reader may not be so.

Therefore, we think it not out of place to devote a short space to Arctic matters generally.

In the first place, we will devote a few words to what is certainly the most prominent object in Polar Seas—the ice,

which is designated by Arctic travellers by a variety of appellations, according to the size or shape of the pieces, their number or form of aggregation, thickness, transparency, situation, etc.

Thus, an 'iceberg' is a large, insulated peak of floating ice, or a glacier occupying a ravine or valley, generally opening towards the sea in an Arctic country.

A 'field' is a sheet of ice so extensive that its limits cannot be discovered from the ship's masthead.

A 'floe' is similar to a field, but smaller, inasmuch as its extent can be seen; but this term is seldom applied to pieces of ice of less diameter than half a mile or a mile.

'Drift ice' consists of pieces less than 'floes,' of various shapes and magnitudes.

'Bay ice' is that which is newly formed on the sea, and consists of two kinds—common bay ice and pancake ice; the former occurring in smooth, extensive sheets, and the latter in small, circular pieces, with raised edges.

'Sludge' consists of a stratum of detached ice crystals, or of snow, or of the smaller fragments of ice floating on the surface of the sea.

A 'mammoth' is a protuberance raised upon any plain of ice above the common level.

A 'calf' is a portion of ice which has been depressed by some larger mass, from beneath which it shows itself on one side. But it would be tedious to give all the fanciful names which mariners have invented for the fantastic forms assumed by ice in the far Arctic seas.

It need scarcely be said that Vandrechoker had had abundant reasons to observe the effects on the human frame of an Arctic winter, and that he had found it to consist of the accumulation of almost everything among atmospheric phenomena that is disagreeable to the feelings,

together with the privation of those bounties of Heaven with which other parts of the earth, in happier climates, are so bountifully supplied.

During the whole of the winter months the rays of the sun are neither seen nor felt ; whilst even in June, July, and August, the densest fogs prevail, which are more depressing to the spirits than even the most intense cold.

Fogs are more common near the ice than in the vicinity of the land, more frequent in open seasons than in close seasons, and more intense and more common in the southern fishing stations than in the most northern.

With the zoology of the weird regions in which he resided, Vanderchoker gradually, of course, became familiar, and could not fail to discover that travellers and historians had very much overstated its size.

It may be all very well for ancient naturalists to declare that whales have grown to the length of nine hundred feet, and for more modern ones to state their average length at from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet ; but those that came under Vanderchoker's notice were seldom longer than sixty feet.

Nevertheless, even at this comparatively diminutive size, the whale has a mouth as large as a room, lips fifteen or twenty feet in length, and a tail from eighteen to twenty-six feet wide. Yet, strange to say, the eyes of the whale are little larger than those of the ox.

Our remarks must now be directed to the birds which frequent the Arctic seas and coasts ; and prominent among these are the Brent goose and the cider duck ; the puffin or Greenland parrot, which feeds on shrimps ; and a water-fowl known as the little duck, which occur in the water in thousands together, and sometimes in like abundance on pieces of ice.

But, perhaps, one of the most interesting of Arctic birds to the Arctic traveller is the *Fulmar*, which is the constant companion of the whale fisher; joining his ship immediately on passing the Shetland Islands, and accompanying it through the trackless ocean to the highest accessible latitudes.

It keeps an eager watch for anything thrown over-board; the smallest particle of fatty substance can scarcely escape it.

In the spring of the year, before they have glutted themselves with the fat of the whale, they are pretty good eating, and the sailor boys catch them by means of a hook baited with a piece of fat meat or blubber, and towed by a long line over the ship's stern.

Another common bird in these regions is the Doveca, a beautifully-formed creature, which is so watchful and so quick at diving, that if fired at without the precaution to conceal the flash of the powder, it generally escapes the shot. The common colour is black, but the feet are all red.

One of the most wonderful things with respect to the Arctic seas is the abundance of life which they contain.

The variety of the animal creation is not, indeed, very great, but the quantity of some of the species that occur is truly immense. The minute animalculæ throughout the Arctic Ocean would exceed all the powers of the mind to conceive.

These little creatures constitute the food of the largest animals in the creation. The bear's most general food is the seal. The seal subsists on small fishes, and these again on lesser animals of the tribe, or on the minor animalculæ.

Thus the whole of the larger animals depend on those minute beings which, until about fifty years ago, were not even known to exist in the polar seas.

But the animals which were most useful to our hero, and which, therefore, are most worthy of our notice just now, were the walrus and the bear; and the first may be generally described as something between a bullock and a whale.

It grows to the bulk of an ox, and has a skin which is about an inch thick. It has a short neck, a very bulky body, broadest round the chest, and diminishing towards a very short tail. The hair is extremely close, and from being black in youth, become white in old age.

The old stories about mermaids were, in all probability, suggested by the aspect of the walrus, and Vanderehoker himself frequently saw them in such a position that it required but little stretch of imagination to mistake them for human beings.

But the time had now come when he was really to see live men and women too—inhabitants of these frozen and inhospitable wastes, which he believed to be tenanted only by the Arctic animals—the fierce bears, the huge walrus, the sleek and wary seal, and the sly white foxes, with difficulty distinguished from the snow and ice on which they were.

CHAPTER X.

THE capacity of the human frame for enduring intense cold is marvellous.

Man is about the only animal that can exist in a temperature 50 degrees below zero, and also with the thermometer ranging to 100 degrees in the shade, as is frequently the case near the equator.

Hans Vanderchoker, tolerably well inured to intense cold, was yet unable to remain on deck or on the ice when there was any wind, especially from the northward.

At such times he was compelled to keep in the cabin ; and even there, within a few yards of the stove, where there was a good fire, water froze.

But when it was calm he found it possible to endure the most intense cold without any very serious inconvenience.

In the cabin the temperature was generally a few degrees above freezing close to the stove, while, at a distance of a few yards, it fell to 25 or 26 degrees.

On deck, however, it was often 50 degrees, and on one occasion 56 degrees below zero.

The effect of so sudden a change in the temperature was such as to make Hans more cautious for the future.

The intense cold thus suddenly encountered had a numbing and stupefying effect upon his faculties, and when he managed to get back to the cabin and closed the door, he reeled like a drunken man.

His eyes swelled—his mouth seemed to be contracted—his hands could no longer perform their office, and he was only just able to crawl to the neighbourhood of the stove, where he threw himself down, and fell into a deep sleep.

During the whole of the month of January a northerly wind prevailed, and the cold continued as fierce as ever.

For more than three weeks our friend Hans scarcely dared venture out of the cabin, and when he did so, it was only for a few minutes.

On the first day of February, however, the wind shifted to the southward, and the temperature rose to only 10 degrees below zero.

Hans was now able to leave the cabin and go out on the ice, without feeling any inconvenience from the cold.

Hitherto, he had seen no sign of a human being of any kind. The only animals he had come across had been bears, walruses, seals, and white foxes.

What, then, was his astonishment, on this first day of February, when he saw, from the deck of the *Ajax*, a number of dark objects moving on the snow-covered land of the island!

Directing a glass towards them, he perceived that they were human beings, and advancing towards the vessel.

Hans waited quietly for them to approach, which they did with great caution.

At first, he hoped, and even thought, that they were Europeans—perhaps the missing crew of the brig; but so soon as they left the land and got on the ice, he knew they were Esquimaux.

He had some slight knowledge of their language, and when they were within earshot encouraged them to come on by shouting out some words.

Obviously, they had never before seen a vessel or a white man; and when, after great hesitation and evident fear on their part, he induced them to come on board, prodigious was their astonishment.

They were in a most miserable condition, almost perished with cold and half starved.

They ate ravenously of food when it was offered them, and Hans was soon on excellent terms with them.

At their invitation, which they conveyed to him by signs, he accompanied them across the ice to the land, and after mounting a slope of about two miles, they came suddenly in view of an Esquimaux village.

His astonishment at this was great, for he had no idea of the existence of any habitation, or even human beings, on this desolate frozen-up islet.

Greater still was his wonder on inspecting this little town. A town of snow, consisting of twenty huts all built of ice and snow, and nothing else.

They were constructed entirely of blocks or bricks of snow, laid with great regularity, so as to form a dome-shaped roof.

The principle was strictly that of the arch, which by some means these savages had discovered and used.

From this date a new era in the present life of Hans Vanderehoker commenced.

These Esquimaux were of great service to him, as he was to them ; and gradually, day by day, as increasing light in the sky towards the north about noon told of the approaching re-appearance of the sun, a scheme unfolded itself to his mind.

He had never forgotten the first idea which came to him, as he thought by inspiration, of penetrating where no man had ever been before—to the North Pole itself.

There would shortly be daylight for a great part of the twenty-four hours.

He knew, however, that at least a couple of months must elapse after the re-appearance of the genial orb of day, before his rays would have sufficient power to thaw and break up the ice.

He scarcely hoped to be free from the ice in less than four months from this first day of February.

And during that period he thought he would have ample time for a polar expedition, which, if successful, would for ever immortalize him, and make him famous.

To the southward lay the islet called Table Island, the most northern spot of land yet discovered.

Beyond lay the islands of Spitzbergen, and a vast tract of frozen sea.

To the north he could discern, from the mast-head, after a space of about two miles of rough, rugged ice, a great level plain.

Smooth water it seemed to him, hardly frozen over

That level desert of glistening ice reached from where he was to the North Pole—a distance of eight degrees, or four hundred and eighty miles.

At the rate of ten miles a day, it could be accomplished in little more than a month and a half.

He calculated that, should it prove to be as he expected and believed—a smooth plain of ice—he could penetrate to the northern axis of the world, and return again before the ice should break up.

‘It shall be done. I will do it. I’ll start in ten days from this, and in fifty I will be on the Pole!’

Having come to this resolution, he at once proceeded to make the necessary preparations to put his scheme in practice.

And, surely, of all extraordinary plans for reaching the Pole that which Hans Vanderchoker had hit upon was the strangest.

But of this in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

THE scheme which Hans had hit upon to reach the North Pole was not altogether a novel one, except in some of the details and certain expedients to which he resolved to resort.

In the first place he determined to fit out one of the boats, build a light wooden cover over her, and affix to her bottom on each side of the keel iron skates running her whole length, which would convert her into a sort of sledge.

This by the aid of the Esquimaux, who worked willingly and well, he soon completed; and next proceeded to store

her well with biscuits, pemmican (of which there was a quantity on board the brig), and a variety of smaller stores, chiefly provisions.

A mast of bamboo, fourteen feet high, with a yard of the same, across which could be spread a tarred canvas sail, which, when they rested, also answered the purpose of an awning ; nautical instruments, a musket, powder, a great quantity of oil—for it was on that they would have to depend for both light and warmth—at last completed the outfit of the boat.

But his most ingenious device is the one we will mention last.

He had observed that oftentimes when it was calm on the ice there was a strong breeze blowing above. This he could tell by the rapid motion of the clouds, which usually were very low.

Also he observed that when there was a northerly breeze at the surface of the ice there was obviously higher up a strong southerly aerial current.

Now he hit upon a plan by which he could take advantage of this breeze in the upper regions of the atmosphere, and use it to drag the boat when the sail was useless, either by reason of a calm or adverse wind at the surface.

A kite !

And forthwith he set to work and constructed an enormous one.

There was plenty of canvas, plenty of light, dry wood, and he accomplished his task in two days, and there being a breeze, successfully flew it.

It might have been supposed that the intense cold and the long polar night would have delayed him—perhaps have rendered work impossible in the affair.

But this was not so. The great winter night, though

sufficiently desolate, is by no means so dark as some might suppose.

The sun, even in the depth of winter, at his greatest southern declination, is only, at this latitude, $13\frac{1}{2}$ degrees below the horizon at noon, and so affords a faint twilight for about a fourth part of the twenty-four hours.

Then there are the stars, the Aurora Borealis, and the moon, which, at times, in these regions, shines for twelve or fourteen days without setting.

At last all was ready for starting, and after two days of incessant labour, the boat was safely dragged over the few miles of rough, rugged ice by Hans and the Esquimaux, who were eager and delighted to accompany the bold Dutchman on his expedition, and they came to a smooth plain of ice, which extended to the northward as far as the eye could reach.

Across this their progress was easy, and twenty miles a-day was made without trouble by the aid of the sails and kite.

This latter proved of advantage. With a high northerly or nor'westerly breeze, it sometimes dragged the boat without any aid from Hans or his crew at all.

We need not describe their passage northward day by day, but will make a leap in point of time.

As the bold and adventurous Dutchman pushed on towards the Pole with his hardy and faithful Esquimaux, difficulties seemed to vanish, and their progress became day by day more easy.

The glories of the Aurora Borealis grew more brilliant as they approached the Pole. After having travelled, constantly, nearly due north, for thirty days, averaging nearly twenty miles a day all through, he found himself in latitude

89, only one degree or sixty miles from the object of his ambition.

On that eventful day the Aurora was unusually brilliant, and as there was a moon and clear sky it was almost as light as though the sun were above the horizon.

There was a brisk breeze, from the southward, and notwithstanding the season and the high latitude, the cold was of bearable intensity.

Hans looked out long and anxiously in the direction of that goal of his hope—the North Pole.

“Three days more, and we shall be there,” he said to himself, “and Hans Vanderchoker will have the honour and glory of being the first man who has ever planted his foot on the North Pole. What is there—there? Land! there must be! For two days I have thought I could make out the form of land. Now I am sure.”

It happened that day at noon, when the sun approached his nearest to the horizon, that there was an unusually glorious Aurora Borealis.

The moon was full, the sky clear, and myriads of stars sprinkled the firmament, so that, in fact, it was almost as light as day.

And Hans, looking southward, suddenly beheld what made his heart leap and thump in his breast.

Land!—high, rocky, mountainous land!

Of that there could be no question.

He could see the white tops of the hills covered as they were with eternal snow. Also, valleys and ravines lower down, which were of a dark green hue, telling that there must be a temperature in which vegetation could exist; and yet, were he now was, even with a southerly wind, the thermometer was thirty degrees below zero.

This was extraordinary.

Hans argued that the valleys and mountain gorges he could so plainly see on that polar land must be much warmer than the spot where he now was.

How could that higher temperature be accounted for?

He could not answer the question, nor even pretend to do so; but it confirmed him in the strange fancy which had taken such firm hold of his mind, that there was habitable land at the North Pole itself.

Encouraged and exhilarated by the extraordinary sight, Hans pressed on, he and his Esquimaux dragging the sledge boat over the smooth ice.

Aided as they were by a brisk southerly breeze, which filled the sail and at times even caused her to glide along without their aid at all, the adventurous party came nearer and nearer to the north axis of the earth.

There succeeded at this time to clear sky and bright moon, cloudy weather, gloom, and darkness.

The ice grew rougher on the second day after Hans had witnessed the extraordinary spectacle to the north.

The Aurora Borealis no longer lighted up the heavens and the ice-bound sea with its ruddy glow.

They now felt all the severity—all the horrors of the long polar night.

Still they struggled on, but slower and slower, not making five miles a day.

Shortly after the brief glimpse of land which Hans had caught, and when they had, under favourable circumstances, traversed about ten miles, a distant rumbling sound was heard.

And as they struggled on, northward, their progress becoming hourly more difficult, the ice more rugged, the cold more intense, this noise, which was at first but a low, rumbling sound, increased to a dull, monotonous roar.

‘The sea! It is open water, and that which we hear is the roar of breakers,’ said Hans to himself.

This was discouraging.

Hans had hoped that there was land—a continent perhaps—inhabited by human beings, and now the sound of the sea, at no great distance, seemed to negative the idea.

Was it possible that the sight he had got of snow-capped mountains, but with valleys and slopes covered with verdure, could be all a delusion?

The thought was a disagreeable one, but it would arise.

However, Hans, nothing daunted, determined to push on, and did so.

Toiling over the rough and rugged ice, sometimes making only two miles in a whole day.

It was his practice to retire to rest within the shelter of the boat at about four hours past noon, and to rise and start again two hours after midnight, when, of course, in the absence of moon or Aurora, the gloom would be very great.

But on the occasion of which we are now about to speak, a glorious surprise awaited him, as, after having partaken of hot coffee, boiled over an oil lamp, their then only source of heat and light, and putting on the warmest clothing, he proceeded to remove the sail awning which covered over the sledge-boat.

There was a bright, ruddy glow pervading the whole expanse—a light equal to and resembling that of an enormous fire.

It was the most brilliant and splendid Aurora they had yet witnessed, and it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that it was as light as day.

Looking northward, a splendid, a glorious sight met his eyes.

First, open sea, with huge waves and breakers dashing against and tumbling over the edge of the ice.

This appeared only about a mile distant.

Beyond this, and over an expanse of open water, land—the same land he had before seen, with its snow-capped hills and green slopes and valleys.

But it was much nearer, and, of course, plainer now.

Imagine, then, his wild excitement and delight when he made out—near to the foot of the mountains—what seemed to be a well-built and comfortable-looking town.

Almost trembling with joy, he took the spy-glass and looked through it long and earnestly.

A shout of joy he could not suppress escaped him as he perceived, on a high promontory of and jutting into the sea, a flag-staff and flag. Nothing else than the British ensign, floating thus proudly on the North Pole!

Hans could scarcely believe his eyes, but here it was—as plain as plain could be.

‘Whether I ever reach that land or not—whether I ever return safely or not—I can die happy; for I have been to the North Pole and seen the flag there. But I shall get up there, and I shall get home all safe and sound.’

Hans was destined to return in safety as he said; but he never got any nearer to the land, or the flag on the North Pole.

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Hans Vanderchoker, full of enthusiasm, almost confident now that he had seen the flag on the land at the North Pole, and that he and his Esquimaux would be able to drag the boat over the short expanse of ice which lay between them and the open sea, set to work with a will.

They had traversed about half a mile of the distance, when one of the Esquimaux cried out, suddenly—‘*Ach su*

spadh!” which Hans, an old whaler, well knew meant, ‘There she spouts!’

He himself dragging at the boat at the moment with all his might, had his back to the north; but, instantly turning round, an extraordinary sight met his eyes.

Against the beautiful Aurora glow showed up plainly several jets of water shooting from the sea high up into the sky.

Hans was speechless—utterly dumbfounded with astonishment.

He, an old Arctic voyager, knew that the Esquimaux who called, “*Ach su spadh!*” merely meaning that the appearance was caused by a whale’s spouting, must be wrong; for whales do not spout clear jets of water, but only spray and vapour from their blow-holes.

While he was still gazing and wondering what these jets could be, there came a blast of wind from the north—not as might have been expected, intensely cold, but warm—almost painfully warm; and then, at the spot where he had seen each thin jet of water springing high into the air, there came, first, a burst of white vapour, which seemed like smoke, but was in reality steam, and after this a huge mound, almost a mountain of water, seemed to upheave itself from the sea, and attaining a height of some hundred feet or more, subsided with a dull roar amidst volumes of smoke and steam, behind which canopy the land, and even the sea itself, was entirely hidden.

And then, urged by the tremendous swell, which the rise and fall of such a volume of water must necessarily produce, the ice began to groan, crackle, and break up, and the waves breaking on to the floe, the water soon reached the sledge-boat.

It was warm!

Hans realised this astounding fact, and then stood for a moment surveying the extraordinary scene in deep thought.

As he gazed northward, another mound of water, similar to the last, rose and fell, accompanied by more swell, and, of course, by more agitation of the sea and ice.

‘Ah!’ said the Dutchman calmly. ‘I see it all now, but I must go back. The ice is breaking up, and no boat can live among such mountains of water. There is land at the North Pole. I have seen it—the town, and the British flag on Flagstaff Point. And it is warm up at that land. And why? There are hot springs in Ireland, what they call *geysers*. But they are only little spouts. The great *geysers*, the great hot springs, spring up about the land of North Pole, so there it is always warm. I think they come at regular times. My luck is bad. I cannot go there now. And if I do not soon get out of this, the ice will break, the boat be smashed, and we be all drowned. No matter. I will come again, and will go to the place where I have seen the flag on the North Pole.’

‘Now, my brave boys,’ he said to his Esquimaux crew, ‘home again! The climate here is too warm for us!’ which, as far as they were concerned, was really the fact; the ice rapidly melting from the effects of the warm water, was a temperature considerably above freezing point.

And so they slewed the boat’s head round and started back south.

After a good deal of privation and hard work, they regained Table Island, where the brig lay frozen in.

Going and returning, they had been seventy days, and when they reached the Ajax the sun welcomed them, for he made his appearance on that very day.

Then came the summer, an unusually early one.

Hans, without much difficulty, induced the Esquimaux to

form his gear, giving them the privilege, of course, of taking their wives with them, and promising to bring them back next season.

And so it happened that Hans Vanderchoker sailed into the port of Greenock with the missing brig Ajax and an Esquimaux crew.

He had, as the reader knows, a marvellous tale to relate, but there were some people so sceptical as not to believe that he had seen **THE FLAG ON THE NORTH POLE.**

CHRISTMAS IN GERMANY.

A HUGE fire crackled and blazed in the great hall of the Schloss, or Castle, of Altenberg, the ancestral home of the Baron von Altenberg, situate on the silvery Rhine.

The hall was a blaze of light; the polished waxed floor reflecting the sparkling glare of many wax bougies.

It was Christmas Eve; and in that ancient German castle the old traditions were adhered to, and Christmas kept as in the olden time.

All was mirth and fun. Lovely maidens' silvery laughter mingled with the merry prattle of happy children, and the gruff good-humoured voice of the old baron mingled with the pleasant tones of the young men, as each murmured soft nonsense in the ear of his lady-love.

There were Gretchen, Hilda, and Frederica, the two former the handsome daughters of the baron, the latter the niece.

Then there were Fritz, Albrecht, and Otho, sons of neighbouring gentlemen, who, for reasons of their own, with which perhaps the bright eyes of the pretty maidens had something to do, chose to spend this Christmas Eve at Altenberg.

Then, too, there was a whole troop of children—Ernest, Frederic, Christian, and Wilhelm; Wilhelmina, Therese, Undine, Anna, and Maria Louisa; the latter, five golden-haired little ladies, ranging from six to twelve years old—merry-faced, frolicsome young fawns, who as yet had experienced none of the trials and troubles of the world.

The baron sat in a chair of state, occupying the centre of a wide semicircle grouped around the great fireplace, with its huge fire of fir-logs on the bricked hearth.

The young ladies and gentlemen, and the elder folks,

occupied chairs, while the children, scorning such formalities, contented themselves with stools, the knees of their favourites, or even the bright polished floor.

Behind, on the long table, brilliantly lighted, was the grand affair of the night—the Christmas-tree.

And ever and anon the children would creep through or under the fireside circle, and devour with seemingly never-ending curiosity and delight the sparkling wonders on the Christmas-tree.

This old German custom (for we imported the Christmas-tree from the “Fatherland”) was kept up with full pomp and splendour at the Castle of Altenberg.

It was a splendid miniature fir-tree, as large as could be conveniently got into the hall.

Its branches were resplendent with light, sparkling with children’s jewels, weighed down with toys gleaming with gold and silver, and all the colours of the rainbow.

There were flags of all nations—grand fancy banners of no known nation—Swiss toys, Dutch toys, and French jewellery.

There was fancy work and embroidery, on which the nimble fingers of the young ladies had been long employed; birds of Paradise, boxes of bon-bons, bottles of scent, and a thousand and one articles it would take pages to particularise.

Let it suffice, that in the eyes of the wondering and happy children, this was the grandest and most marvellous Christmas-tree ever seen.

There were strange legends as to whence all these toys, gems, and other beautiful things came.

The younger members of the party would accept no tame prosaic solution of the origin of all the marvels of the Christmas-tree.

The old baron had let drop some mysterious hints as to his knowledge of how the ornaments, toys, and so forth, were come by.

And, moreover, he had allowed to slip from him the charming, the delightful word, to all children—fairies.

Of course, he was badgered and teased till he promised, in the course of the evening, to tell the tale.

‘Grandpapa, it was fairies, was it not, who hung all those pretty things on the Christmas-tree?’ eagerly asked, or rather pleaded, a bright-eyed little damsel of some seven years old, who might herself well have passed for one.

‘Oh, certainly—yes, my child! Who but fairies could deek out a tree in such a beautiful manner?’

‘Oh! do tell us all about it. You know you said you would.’

‘Yes—yes!’ cried half-a-dozen tinkling child-voices. ‘You said you would, grandpapa.’

‘Well, my children, I will tell the story as it was related to me by Carl, our boatman. It was he whom the fairies favoured.’

‘The story—the story of the fairies!’ now resounded on all hands.

Thus urged, the baron told the tale of how Carl—Carl, the boatman—became possessed of a wonderful box of beautiful things for the Christmas-tree.

THE STORY OF CARL, THE BOATMAN, AND THE FAIRIES OF THE RHINE.

The boatman, Carl, a few nights ago, had occasion to go down to the river, in order to take up some of the night-lines and nets, and other devices he had set to catch fish for our table.

It was a bright moonlight night, and myriads of stars were in the sky, and it was really almost as light as day.

He was just about getting into his boat, singing one of his favourite songs, when he was startled by a voice, and the sight of a strange-looking figure on the bank.

‘Stay a moment, Meister Carl; I want to speak to you!’

‘Ha! Who are you?’ cried our faithful boatman; ‘and what do you do trespassing on the lands of my master, the baron?’

‘Who am I? Ha! ha! ha! He! he! he!’ chuckled the speaker. ‘Look well at me, and say what you think of me.’

Carl did so, and was both surprised and a little bit uneasy at the queer figure before him.

A dwarf, scarce two feet and a-half high, clad all in black velvet, but with numerous buttons to his doublet and vest, which, by their brilliant glitter, were evidently diamonds of the first water.

On his head he had a black velvet cap, with a large diamond clasp, and a plume of ostrich feathers.

His eyes were black as night, and sparkled almost as brightly as the diamond ornaments he wore.

His features had a quaint, old-fashioned look, although he did not appear to be an old man.

He stooped slightly, and was bow-legged, nevertheless was as nimble as a squirrel; and, to Carl’s utter astonishment, while he was regarding the strange-looking dwarf, this singular being suddenly made a great leap, of at least ten feet, on board the boat which Carl had prudently pushed off from the shore.

At first our good boatman was angry, and felt disposed

to lay hold of the little manikin, and pitch him into the river.

But the dwarf laughed, and somehow quite disarmed his anger.

‘He! he! he! Ha! ha! ha! Ho! ho! ho! What a strange fellow you are! Come, now, you had better be reasonable, and do what I want you.’

‘What is it you want?’ asked Carl, rather sulkily; for he did not quite like his boat being taken by board as it were.

‘I want you to take a cargo over to the other bank. If you won’t it will be bad for you; if you will, you shall have any wish you like—any amount of money.’

There was something very strange about the dwarf. His manner was half-threatening, half-persuasive; and Carl felt a sort of vague uneasiness, not to say fear, pervade him.

‘What sort of cargo, mynheer?’ he asked.

‘Never you mind—row your boat close in shore.’

Carl obeyed—he scarce knew why. He felt as though compelled to obey by some irresistible impulse.

He rowed his boat close up to the bank, and the little man, taking his place at the tiller, said to him, in an authoritative manner—

‘Now, Meister Carl, take your place at the oars, but think not of starting till I tell you!’

He obeyed, and they both sat still for some time. Carl, after a time, began to wonder how long it would be before the cargo the little man spoke of would come on board.

Presently, however, he noticed that his boat was sinking deeper in the water, and he heard a sort of scrambling and snuffling noise, like the sound of the pattering feet of hundreds of rats and mice.

Deeper and deeper sank the boat, to Carl's intense astonishment, till her gunwale came within a few inches of the water. At last she appeared just for all the world as if she were heavily laden, though he could see nothing whatever on board save himself and the little man.

'Now you can start, Meister Carl, as our first load is on board. But you must be careful, as it will be a terrible thing for you if you upset the boat. Ha, ha! You would then feel the consequences, and be drowned besides!'

Carl did as he was ordered, and with the utmost care paddled the boat gently to the opposite shore.

As soon as he arrived there, it began gradually rising in the water, as though the cargo was being taken out. In a few minutes it was just as before he first saw the little man. /

'Now row back and fetch one more cargo,' was the order, 'and you have earned your reward.'

Carl obeyed, and exactly the same thing happened as before.

When he had reached the opposite shore the second time, and the boat, as before, had risen in the water, the little man said to him, 'Would you like to see the loads you have brought over?'

'Yes, indeed, I should,' replied Carl, who had now got over his uneasiness.

'Very well, then; shut your eyes, and open them when I tell you.'

He obeyed, and, in a moment or two, felt some water sprinkled in his face.

'Now open your eyes, and look at the meadow which slopes down to the water, close to the boat.'

He opened his eyes, and looked, and a wonderful sight met his eye. He saw hundreds and thousands of little

people, not more than six inches high, dancing and gambolling on the green.

Carl watched their graceful antics with wonder and delight, and thought he would never be tired of gazing on them as they disported themselves in the beautiful moonlight.

They were all attired in the most beautiful and radiant dresses, and were as handsome and elegant as it was possible to conceive.

'There,' said the little man, 'that's your cargo! How many thalers do you want for taking them across?'

Carl was about to name a good round sum; but all at once he bethought himself, and said, 'No, thank you, mynheer, no money—I won't have any money!'

'Well, what will you have?'

Carl thought, and then he remembered that Christmas was close at hand, and thought of the Christmas-tree.

'Surely,' he said, 'there can be no harm in my asking for some beautiful things for that. If there is anything wrong or diabolical in them, I am sure they dare not give anything for the Christmas-tree. If they are bad people, it would be like the devil going to church.' So he spoke out boldly, 'I want a beautiful box of toys, ornaments, jewelry, and so forth, for the baron's Christmas-tree.'

Suddenly all the fairies stopped dancing, and he heard thousands of musical tiny voices, like very little silver bells, cry out, 'Good Carl, excellent Carl, you shall have your box for the Christmas-tree.'

Then the little man spoke.

'To-morrow, at midnight, come to this place in your boat. Wait in silence until you hear the sound of music. Then row to the place, and you will find a box. Now embark, and go back. Leave your nets and lines to-night.'

Carl obeyed; and the next night was at the spot punctually.

Everything turned out as the dwarf had told him.

He heard the sound of sweet, low music, and rowed to the place whence it seemed to come—a quantity of rushes growing on the river bank.

In a little creek among these, he found, as promised, a box, which he at once put on board the boat and took up to the castle.

He found in it all the beautiful toys, ornaments, and other things you now see on the Christmas-tree.

‘This is the account of Carl, the boatman, as to how the Christmas-tree came to be thus gorgeously decked. Any of you who do not believe it, can question the man himself,’ the baron added, with a smile.

The fairy story was received with great applause by the grown-up young ladies and gentlemen, and the elders, but with wondering awe and implicit credence by the boys and girls of the baron’s Christmas Eve party.

After this, there was general conversation, laughter, fun, and romping among the children; and all went merry as a marriage-bell.

Soon there came cause for great excitement. Christina, one of the bed-room maids, appeared, and made an announcement of deep interest.

It was somewhat mysterious in its nature, and a stranger might fairly be puzzled as to what it could mean.

‘My lord baron,’ said the hand-maiden, speaking so that all could hear her; ‘the old man has come—the Wandering Jew!’

‘The Wandering Jew!’

‘The Wandering Jew!’

‘The strange old pedlar!’

‘The old man who never sleeps twice in the same house!’

‘The mysterious pilgrim, whose history no one knows!’

‘Where is he?’ asked the baron; ‘has he brought his pack with him?’

‘Ay, that he has, baron; and a goodly load in it, too—of Christmas finery, and so forth. I have taken him to the kitchen, and given him some refreshment’

‘You have done right, my girl. Ask him if he will stay here to-night; and if so, see that there is accommodation for him.’

‘Yes, baron,’ said the maid; and departed cheerfully enough on her errand.

‘Oh, papa,’ cried Hilda, a meek young damsel, with gravesome, romantic face and earnest eyes, as she grasped the old baron’s brown and wrinkled hand in both her own fair, soft ones—‘I should so like to hear the history of the Wandering Jew. We know we have heard again and again that there is some terrible story connected with him. For why does he everlastingly wander about the country? Why has he no name, but is known only as the Wandering Jew? Why does he never sleep twice in the same house in the year? Why does he always move away even from a town or village after remaining one night? Why is he so silent and sad? Why has he never been known to smile? And do not people say that he is hundreds of years old—for I am told that he has been heard to speak of the great wars of Soutl and Napoleon, Wellington and Blucher, Massena, Ney—and do they not say that he was present at the battle of Fontenoy, with Marshal Saxe?’

‘He must, indeed, be an old man, if such is the case; for Fontenoy was fought in 1745, which is a hundred and twenty years ago.’

‘Oh, that is nothing!’ cried wonder-loving, romantic Hilda. ‘He is hundreds of years older than that. Do they not call him the Wandering Jew? and who knows that he is not the real one, who scoffed at and struck our Saviour, and laboured up to Calvary with the cross? Do, pray, get him to tell his story, papa.’

‘Well, well, silly girl, I will ask him; but I doubt if I shall succeed. See, here he comes.’

And at that moment, introduced by Christina, a strange, almost grotesque, figure appeared on the threshold.

It was that of a tall old man, with stooping shoulders, clad in a long robe, or gaberdine, and bearing in his hand a pilgrim’s staff.

His face was partly covered by a mask; but two piercing eyes could be seen gleaming out therefrom.

On his back he had a large pack, in which are contained the wares he carries, suitable for this festive time of year.

‘I salute you all, ladies and gentlemen. May health, prosperity, and happiness wait upon you! and may you never know the gnawing pain of remorse and an unquiet conscience!’

The old baron and the ladies—especially Hilda, who had set her heart on having the romance of the Wandering Jew unfolded to her—rose, and received him cordially.

But the younger ones shrunk away in terror at the singular figure. They had all heard strange tales of the Wandering Jew, who travelled incessantly about the country, winter and summer, without ever finding a resting-place; but hitherto none of them had ever seen this mysterious personage.

‘Pray be seated, mynheer, and place your pack down,’ said Hilda, addressing the masked old man.

He accepted her invitation, a place being made for him

in the circle and then putting his pack down before him, proceeded to open it, and display the many beautiful and wonderful things he had for sale.

The sight of the toys and many pretty articles he had, served to dispel the fears of the children ; and there was a great collecting of thalers and groschen.

Soon the old man's pack was nearly empty ; and now, when the sale had grown slack and almost ceased, Hilda thought it a good opportunity for her father, the baron, to keep his promise, and solicit from the Wandering Jew his story, which she did not doubt was a very wonderful one.

But he gravely shook his head in token of unwillingness.

Hilda, however, was not to be so put off ; but urged her request so vehemently, that at last the old man, in a measure, yielded.

'Mine is a sad and wretched history,' he said, 'and I care not to speak of it. But with the permission of the most noble company, and as the young lady seems so anxious for a story, I will tell her one which fell within my own experience during the great war, over sixty years ago now.'

'You see,' whispered Hilda to her father, 'he speaks of what he witnessed sixty years ago as if it were a mere nothing !'

A deep silence, broken only by the crackling of the wood-fire, reigned as the old man commenced his story.

THE OLD PEDLAR-PILGRIM'S STORY.

WHEN the great and terrible Napoleon ravaged Europe, laying waste this country, among others, and overthrowing monarchs as children knock down skittle-pins, there were two brothers in a Prussian infantry regiment, Leopold and Joseph von Wolfgang.

Leopold, the elder, was a lieutenant ; while the younger, Joseph, was simply a sergant.

But in the army, then, all had to rise from the ranks, or pass to direct commissions from the military colleges.

The brothers Von Wolfgang had not been to any military college, so had to commence their military career as private soldiers. They were well educated and of noble birth ; so, as a matter of course, their promotion would be rapid, and they would be appointed to commissions so soon as they had passed through the necessary grades, and there were vacancies.

Leopold von Wolfgang was the elder, and received his commission first, as was right and proper.

The home and estates of the Wolfgangs were in the outskirts of the town of Wisbaden, in the kingdom of Nassau, about four miles from the Rhine.

The brothers had been brought up together, and, of course, they had the same friends and acquaintances.

Among these latter was a young lady of noble birth, Heloise von Radstadt, only daughter of an Austrian general, who had lived in Nassau.

And here was the little cloud—at first insignificant, merely a cause of slight annoyance—which afterwards swelled to most terrible proportions.

Both the young men fell in love with the beautiful Austrian.

Each tried to conceal the fact from the other, and to persuade himself that he himself was the favoured lover.

Each urged his suit on every convenient opportunity ; but the young lady coquettishly avoided making a decided choice, thus, unhappily, encouraging the hopes of both.

Leopold was twenty-two years of age, Joseph twenty-one, when both entered the army ; and their thoughts were.

in a measure, at least, diverted from their *inamorata*, and turned to the more serious business of actual warfare.

A year and a half passed ; and, after seeing much service, the regiment to which the brothers belonged was ordered to the fortified town of Mentz, or Mayence, on the Rhine, to form part of the garrison.

Now, Wisbaden, the native place of the Wolfgangs, was distant only some four or five miles on the other side of the river.

Here, also, was the home of Heloise von Radstadt ; but she was gone on a visit to Vienna.

The country was in a very disturbed state—for the enemy was marching and countermarching in Nassau ; and the fortified town of Mentz was constantly threatened.

It was most important that it should be held ; therefore the greatest exertions were made to strengthen the defences, and the utmost vigilance enjoined by the commander of the garrison—a stern, hard martinet and excellent soldier, General Kunesdorf.

After the brothers had been in garrison there some three months, desertions began to grow frequent—so much so that the most stringent precautions were taken, and the most severe orders issued.

Death was the penalty for desertion—death, also, was the penalty for any officer or sentry permitting a soldier to pass his post or guard.

At this time there came private intelligence to Joseph von Wolfgang that Heloise had returned to Wisbaden. He kept this to himself, breathed no word of it to his brother, and resolved to see her.

To do so, he must gain permission to leave the fortress ; for every gate and sentry-post was most strictly guarded, and under the command of an officer.

Joseph von Wolfgang waited until his brother was on duty at the river-gate, and then requested him to allow him to pass, promising to return before daylight.

Leopold von Wolfgang, ever noble and generous, consented, and himself ordered the guard and sentries to allow his brother to pass. He had the most implicit faith in the honour of the other, and did not for a moment doubt he would be back long before daylight.

As for Joseph von Wolfgang, he was mad with love for the fair Austrian, and also, though he believed he was the favoured one, was desperately jealous of his brother; for lately he had seen Leopold reading over old letters, in which he recognised her handwriting, and he thought he had discovered him looking at her miniature. So Joseph determined to strike a decisive blow, and get her to acknowledge her preference for him, and betroth herself.

No boats were allowed on the Mentz bank of the river near the fortress, so Joseph had to walk half a mile down the river, where he hired a boat, and went safely across.

He reached Wisbaden, and found the lady within, and alone. Here his good fortune ended.

The lady at first evaded his passionate protestations and demands of an acknowledgment that she returned his love.

This, after much fencing, she definitely refused to do.

Challenged for a reason, accused of having a rival, she grew angry; and finally acknowledged boldly that she was secretly betrothed to his brother Leopold.

Joseph had a black and terrible temper. The most fearful rage possessed him, and he shook with passion.

He took his leave of her, determined to be revenged; and, alas! the means of that revenge lay but too easy to his hand.

He had but to break his parole to his brother, and,

instead of returning, as promised, fly to the enemy's lines, and then Leopold would assuredly be shot the next day.

Satan possessed his heart, and he resolved on this terrible infamy.

So, instead of returning, he strolled about the town nursing his rage, and trying to persuade himself that he was justified in what he was doing.

But his heart was not all bad. The voice of conscience or the whisperings of his good angel, told him that he was committing a dreadful, a horrible, and unpardonable crime and infamy.

As day dawned, he relented. His better nature prevailed, and he gave up his dastardly revenge, and determined to return to the fortress, and, on the first opportunity, force his brother to fight a duel to the death.

When he got back to the river side the boat was gone. The boatman, tired of waiting, had gone away.

And now he realised all the horror of his situation ; the fearful predicament into which his evil passions had placed him.

He was to be his brother's murderer.

It is two hours after sunrise, on a bright spring morning, in the fortress of Mentz, when a young officer, guarded by a file of soldiers, is led out to die—to be shot.

He is pale, and looks anxiously around him, as though he expected help and rescue.

It is Leopold von Wolfgang, and it is his brother whom he expects—for he has not the faintest suspicion that he would play him false, and thinks some accident has delayed him.

The grave is dug—the condemned man is placed beside it—the file of soldiers drawn up before him.

All is in readiness for the execution.

They await but the general's order.

At this moment a strange figure comes rushing on the scene.

Pale and haggard, looking more ghastly than the condemned—dripping wet, for he has swam the river—Joseph von Wolfgang runs up to the officer in command of the firing party.

‘Sir, where is the general? For the love of heaven, delay the execution until I see him!’

‘We are awaiting his order for the execution,’ says the officer, sternly. ‘You had better go to your quarters, Sergeant Wolfgang.’

Joseph Wolfgang darts off, and in a few minutes is at the general's tent.

He contrives, partly by force, partly by entreaty, to pass the sentry, and appears before the astonished general, all dripping wet, and pale as a ghost.

‘Who the devil are you? and what's the meaning of this?’

‘I am the supposed deserter. I have been delayed accidentally. I have come back to save my brother's life!’

Then he himself told all the affair—the general listening attentively.

Though stern, he was not a cruel man.

‘I have just finished writing the warrant for his execution,’ he said. ‘It shall be, at all events, postponed; he shall be tried by court-martial for his disobedience of orders in allowing you to pass.’

‘Heaven reward you, general!’ cried Joseph. ‘Write the order of reprieve, and let me be the bearer!’

General Kunesdorf took another slip of paper, wrote a few lines, and laid it on the table.

Joseph von Wolfgang snatched it up, and ran off to the parade-ground, where the execution party and the condemned awaited the death-warrant.

He marched up to the officer, and thrust the paper into his hands.

The officer read it, and looked at him with unutterable horror and disgust.

‘Stand back, villain!’ he said, to Joseph’s great astonishment. Perforce he obeyed, wondering why the officer should so regard and address him.

Next he heard the ring of ramrods; and then the words of command.

‘*Present!—aim!—fire!*’

And with eyes glaring with horror, he saw his brother fall dead—pierced with many bullets.

He understood it not then; but afterwards the appalling truth became known to him.

He had been the bearer of his own brother’s death-warrant, as well as the cause of his death.

In his hurry and excitement, he had snatched up the wrong paper—the order for execution—and hurried off with it.

They waited but for this, and dared wait no longer; and so he had the unutterable horror of seeing his brother shot before his eyes, in obedience to an order he himself had carried.

When the old man had finished his story, he rose, shouldered his pack, and taking his staff in hand, prepared to leave.

‘I wish you a good eve, and a happy Christmas, ladies and gentlemen,’ he said; ‘and may you never feel the goings of remorse, or the pangs of a guilty conscience.’

‘Will you not stay the night?’ urged the baron.

‘Yes,’ put in Hilda, who was delighted at having her taste for romance gratified by the old man’s story.

‘Thanks, no ; I feel too sad and wretched to stay. I must start again on my pilgrimage.’

‘But why have you doomed yourself to such a wretched dismal, wandering, friendless life ? ’ urged Hilda.

‘I have sworn it, lady, as some little expiation of my sin. You ask me why ; I will tell you,’ he added, sadly. ‘Lady, I am Joseph von Wolfgang!’

‘I knew there was some terrible mystery about him, from his air,’ said Hilda, when he had gone. ‘I was sure of it ; and you see I am right.’

‘Yes, Hilda, you were ; I shall give you credit for the future. And now, suppose, after these two stories—that of Carl, the boatman, and the Wandering Jew—we spend the rest of the evening in being as noisy and merry as possible. Let those who love dancing, dance ; those who are fond of singing, sing ; and every one enjoy himself as he or she pleases. It is Christmas Eve, and on such a night, dullness is a forbidden guest at the Castle of Altenberg.’

And so they danced and sung—the young ones amused themselves with the Christmas-tree and old fashioned German games ; the young ladies and their cavaliers, some of them, found more serious and romantic employment ; while the elders of the party reaped their share of enjoyment by watching the merriment and high spirits of the younger branches.

And so, ’midst mirth and jollity, bright eyes, merry voices, and hearty laughter, passed Christmas Eve at the Schloss Altenberg.

THE PRINCESS GENEVIEVE.

‘NAY,’ said the princess’s tire-woman ; ‘ the knight, though as lowly as knight may well be, yet is a gallant one.’

‘ I doubted it nothing,’ said a lady in attendance ; ‘ but it is presumption in him to look so much above his condition—to a princess of Florence. Yet nothing would amaze me of these English knights, whose pride and presumption are both insuperable.’

‘ That might be ; but the knight might adore the sun and the moon ; yet, he should not be blameworthy for doing so, or if he look upon the princess in the same humble light and at the same distance.’

‘ That were cold worship, truly, and such as these knights love not.’

‘ There thou art wrong,’ replied the lady. ‘ What says our princess ?’

‘ That I cannot see the harm or presumption, where a good knight pays his homage.’

‘ I think, your grace, that is an opinion that man may hold, without being held unworthy for doing so.’

‘ I do not say that, for we know nothing of this stranger—we cannot tell you whether he be a good knight or not.’

‘ I thought you had seen enough of that when he worsted your champion some weeks by-gone,’ said that lady.

Her companion’s colour rose at that allusion, which was, indeed, the grand reason for her displeasure at the knight’s silent admiration of her mistress’s beauty and worth. This was a home-thrust, but she was not beaten or foiled by it.

‘ Many a good knight has fared worse, and yet no

dishonour can be attached to his name, I believe,' she replied.

'Thou art right; but thou oughtest to know that the brave and fair are ever companions, or they should be so.'

'Now, your grace is right as to what only ought to be; but it seldom is so, and thus it is we adopt a rule for what is done in preference to what is not done.'

'The Lady Camilla hath logic,' replied her grace, 'if she hath not wit. Yet one might be allowed to judge between principle and practice; so, because wrong is done, that wrong should be done.'

'Her grace hath you there, Lady Camilla,' said her companion.

'You cannot deny the knight's good qualities?'

'I do not wish—neither is there a need to do so; but I never yet saw him do more than other knights do.'

'You are choice of your praise, my lady,' said the princess; 'think you the knight is very poor?'

'I do, your grace; and yet I would not withhold any praise that may be his due on that account.'

'Your reasons for considering him poor?' continued the princess.

'His armour is very plain, and such as knights wear when about to engage in a general *mêlée* or battle.'

'I do not consider that a fair reason, since many gentlemen do the same.'

'Granted. But his has many a bruise on it, and many a gap that a little gold and an armourer could readily mend.'

'I grant that there is more reason in that than in thy first objection, and yet who knows but he may thus fight under some vow; such things thou knowest.'

The Lady Camilla looked grave, and merely shook her head in the gentlest and most serious manner

‘There is some wisdom afloat, I can see by the motion of our worthy Camilla’s head,’ said the princess. Her curiosity aroused on the subject, she determined to hear all out that could be said.

‘I fear your grace thinks that there is little wisdom in my head.’

‘Say not so, good Camilla ; we do not undervalue thy services or thy counsel ; and if we differ from thee, it is in all kindness and courtesy. Speak on, and let us hear thy opinion on the possibility of his being under a vow to wear the marks of previous combat.’

‘I think it very unlikely ; the knight, though brave and strong, would not, even for your sake, my lady, brave the encounter without a sufficient protection of iron to keep out the lance-heads and sword-blades.’

‘Upon my honour you do the knight wrong ; he would, I am convinced, did our necessity require it, peril himself for our sake without any defensive armour.’

‘You have not seen him tried, your grace,’ said the Lady Camilla.

‘No ! and God forbid I should see him put to such a dreadful proof.’

‘Then your grace can never know whether your knight loves you truly ; for I believe he would shun the tournament should he not be clad in mail.’

‘I doubt it ; and were it not for the cruelty, I would have him try.’

‘Then try, madam ; you can give a noble reward,’ said the Lady Fiametta.

‘What mean you ?’ said the princess.

‘That after you have put his courage and devotion to

such a cruel test, you could not refuse to accept the worthy knight.'

'And worthy he would be. But what would my father say to such a course?'

'He would never oppose such an union; though it might bring his lasting displeasure, yet he would not object.'

'It is not worth while to consider what your father the prince would do, your grace; for be assured the knight would reject even your grace's hand when accompanied by such exposure to his person.'

'Now, by our Lady, this passes our patience,' said Genevieve. 'I will try my champion; and if I find him true—if he accepts my offer and fights valiantly in the tournament, unarmed with defensive armour—I would sacrifice all that princess or maiden possessed to such a champion, if he comes out whole; and if not, I would wear weeds, and mourn for so true a knight for the remainder of my days.'

'That would be a noble reward,' said the Lady Camilla; 'but I will wager this casket of jewels—and they cost a large sum—against the ring on your grace's finger, that he will not do your behest.'

'I accept thy wager, wench,' replied the princess; 'and, Fiametta, call my page here, and say I have need of him.'

'Does your grace intend to send to him?' inquired the Lady Camilla.

'Certainly we do,' replied the Princess Genevieve. 'Dost fear thy wager already?'

'Oh! no, no! It is too sure.'

'Be not too positive—too strong in thy wisdom; for it may turn out the wisdom of folly.'

The princess was a most beautiful woman, of large fortune; and great dominions would be given by her father.

But he must be noble, and a knight of renowned valour, who would meet with the princess's approbation. The knight who had attracted the ladies' observation by his silent devotion and great valour was an Englishman, whose name and lineage they, as well as every one else, were utterly ignorant of; he was simply known as 'The Knight of the Dark Cloud;' such being the fanciful device which he bore, and by which he chose to be known and no other.

At a tournament given by the Prince of Provence in honour of his daughter's attainment of her eighteenth year, this knight had vanquished all competitors, and her champions. He stood at length alone and unchallenged; for such was the discomfiture of the knights, that many of them were carried out of the lists, from the violence with which they were hurled from their saddles; attesting at once the skill and strength of the stranger to whom the prize was awarded, and which he deposited with all humility at the feet of the princess.

The page now came to the princess, and inquired what it was her pleasure he should do; and she awoke as if from a dream. After a moment's hesitation, she said—

'Dost know, good youth, the tent of the English knight, who is known as the 'Knight of the Dark Cloud,' who dismounted so many knights at the tournaments?'

'I can easily find it, if he have any; but I have not heard that he had one.'

'Then thou must inquire and find him out, and bear him this message—and this too,' she said, as she took from off her shoulders a velvet mantle, curiously wrought with gold; 'and tell him that you bring this from the Princess Genevieve of Provence; and further, it is her behest that he wear this mantle as the only defence he shall put on in

the forthcoming tournament of Saint John the Baptist. Tell him to fight as he always has done, to acquire renown, and win his lady's favour; and if he come out of the *mêlée*, we will bestow especial marks of favour on him.'

The page received the mantle, and making a lowly reverence, he departed on his mission to the good knight.

From this commission he did not readily return; it was late at eve when he did, and he then sought the presence of his mistress.

'Well, page, thou hast been very dilatory in this matter.'

'Please your grace,' returned the page, 'the abode of the knight is ill known—it is obscure; but I found him after much time lost in inquiry.'

'How foundest thou him engaged?' said the Lady Camilla.

'He was engaged in riveting and repairing his armour against the coming tournament of Saint John the Baptist. I then delivered your grace's behest, upon which he flung the armour on one side, and said, as he folded the mantle round his heart—

"Tell your mistress the princess, that I will do her pleasure in this matter, and will not vail my crest to the boldest and best mail-clad champion on the lists; but should I come out of the contest alive, it will be her turn to wear this mantle, when stained with my blood, in banquet and bower."

'Did he say nought more?'

'Nothing; but to tell you that you should witness with your own eyes his devotion and loyalty to yourself.'

'It is well,' said Genevieve, after a considerable pause; 'and should he fall, our day of joy will fall with him, for

never shall I be able to atone for the cruelty of my conduct in this matter.'

'Nay, your grace has no need to take on thus. Look at the reward held out to him—it is but adequate. Your grace could not accept of a knight of such low degree without he had acquired sufficient renown and glory to banish all recollection of his personal insignificance.'

'Be it as thou sayest. I hope it may be so. But, Camilla, what thinkest thou of thy wager?'

'Why, your grace, that it is barely so secure as I at first believed. I could not think he would be so hardy as to venture on such an adventure as the one proposed.'

'Thou see'st now that he will,' replied the Princess Genevieve.

'He has not done it yet, your grace,' replied the Lady Camilla.

'Thou unbeliever,' replied the Lady Fiametta; 'thou wilt make her grace angry by thy ill-timed and constant contradiction.'

'Never mind it, Fiametta; she shall see whether her champion or mine will be the boldest and most successful.'

The bell now rang for vespers, and put an end to the controversy, which was kept up with so much obstinacy by the Lady Camilla that it had now produced anger on the part of the beautiful and amiable princess. They took their way to the chapel, where Genevieve poured out her whole heart and soul in prayers for the success of her bold and adventurous champion, who was about to incur great and imminent hazard on her sole account.

The preparations for the tournament of Saint John the Baptist were going on with great vigour. The lists were large and commodious, and capable of accommodating a vast concourse of spectators. Large galleries were erected

with raised seats for the nobles, among which was a throne raised above the rest; all was covered with crimson cloth and decorations. A gallery was set apart for the ladies and their attendants, who were to grace the field.

These were no inconsiderable share of the spectators, and to the actors in this scene they were all in all, bright eyes and beauty being the highest reward a knight could hope or desire. The knowledge that the maid of his heart was looking on inspired him with strength and courage sufficient to undertake any hazardous adventure.

Many a heart beat high at the opportunity of shining in the eyes of beauty; and many a discomfited knight shrank out of the lists, mortified at the defeat he suffered—a thing that must happen to some, do what they would or could; but all desired to shine in the eyes of the lady of his love.

On the third day, when the grand display of knightly valour was to take place, and the field was divided between defendants and those who attacked, in the midst of the *mêlée*, in the thickest of the fight, when blows fell thickest and spears shivered most, there was seen a champion who wore no defensive armour to guard himself against the blows of his enemies.

He was decorated, or rather, wore a velvet mantle after the manner of a scarf across his right shoulder to his left side. He spared not his own blows nor heeded those of his adversaries, who were numerous, though many refused to strike him, believing he had some vow to perform, and that it was unknighly to slay him thus.

But nevertheless, the gallant knight was sorely wounded in many parts; his mantle was full of sword-cuts and spear-rents, and soaked in his own blood.

The Prince of Provence, seeing such a noble champion

in danger of being overpowered by numbers, threw down his truncheon, and bade the heralds proclaim peace.

This was done, and the Knight of the Velvet Mantle, as he was termed for the occasion, was called by the heralds to present himself before the prince to receive the prize.

By the aid of his squire he was brought to the feet of the prince, and received the prize from his hands.

‘Sir knight,’ he said, ‘we adjudge thee the victor in this tournament, where thy prowess has been so fearfully displayed against iron-clad champions, whilst thou hadst but that embroidered toy to protect thyself. Some vow to thy mistress, I dare swear, is the reason of this. I trust it is now fulfilled, and she must be an unworthy and cruel maid who would desire thee to risk thy life in such a way. Were she of our court, she would suffer disgrace. A good knight’s life is not to be thrown away as a thing of no consequence. Arise, Sir Broidered Mantle, and let us entertain thee as becomes us to treat the victors in these games of chivalry.’

But the knight could not rise. He whispered something to the squire, who took the prize and the mantle off his master, and straight bore them to the Lady Genevieve, who, blushing, took the mantle, stained with the gore of her lover as it was, and placed it on her person as she used to wear it.

When she did this, the eyes of the whole assembly were upon her: and at that moment the litter on which the knight was placed passed her. She looked upon the knight, and the tears came to her eyes.

‘Take,’ she said to the bearers—‘take him to the castle; I will be his attendant until his wounds heal.’

‘And was it thou, Lady Genevieve, who caused this

good knight to risk his life in such a cruelly, unequal contest ?’

‘It was a wager,’ replied the lady. ‘The good knight’s courage was doubted by the Lady Camilla, and I sent the knight the mantle to be worn as he has worn it.’

‘Thou canst not refuse to crown his devotion with the possession of thy hand ; but you become a partaker of his misfortunes, and not of my bounty.’

‘Such was my intention,’ replied Genevieve, slowly retiring.

She returned to the castle, where the good knight was lodged. He was scarcely sensible of any one’s approach, and lay motionless.

The princess’s heart was heavy when she saw this ; but she administered the necessary drugs, and bound up his wounds with her own hands, and sat up night and day.

‘Sir Knight,’ said the beautiful Genevieve, as she saw him attempting to speak soon after his wounds gave way under the force of medicine and care, ‘speak not, I beseech you ; I have too much taxed your devotion. Now let me make amends by playing the leech.’

The knight was silent at her command, though he could not take his eyes off the beautiful vision that fluttered around him.

‘Camilla,’ said the princess, ‘what thinkest thou of our wager ?’

‘The jewels are thine, princess, and I admit I was sorely deceived ; but here they are, and I wish you long life to wear them.’

‘Thy good will, wench, hath saved thy jewels ; keep them, and never be too positive about a good knight’s courage for the future.’

‘The lesson is one I shall not soon forget; but, pardon me, is the day for thy marriage fixed?’

‘It is, wench, conditionally—that is, if my champion will be strong enough to bear yonder suit of Milan armour.’

‘Whose gift is that?’

‘Mine, Camilla; I purchased it of a Jew who brought it hither.’

‘It is superb! I hope it may prove a better protection to him than his last suit at the tournament.’

‘Say no more, wench; I have suffered more pain than my worthy knight, for such he is,’ replied the Princess.

A few months passed over, and the knight recovered from the effects of his wounds, and donned the gay armour which his bride had purchased for him. And thus he wedded, and great were the rejoicings of the prince and all his courtiers, for their strange knight turned out to be a noble exile from England—exiled for the sake of a stronger party than his own.

He bore the title of a duke, yet in his exile would not have divulged his rank; but his death being near at hand, as he supposed, this made him divulge it; but it now became known, and he was hailed as the bridegroom of the lovely Genevieve!

A TRAPPER'S ADVENTURE.

At the close of a cold, raw day, in the fall of the year, two trappers halted beside a mountain stream, in the then great wilderness of the Far West, and proceeded to unburden and picket their mules. This done, they started a fire and toasted some slices of deer meat, which they had

provided for their supper. While thus engaged, it being by this time nearly dark, they were almost startled at hearing a strange voice sing out—‘Hillo, thar, strangers!’

Mechanically they grasped the rifles by their sides, and looked in the direction whence the sounds proceeded. In the gathering gloom they dimly perceived a man mounted upon a beast, quietly awaiting permission to advance.

‘Hillo yourself!’ called back the elder of the two.

‘Want to know ef the sign’s all right, and ary spar’ bed?’ facetiously inquired the other.

‘Reckon we can guv you the soft side of a rock, ef you don’t lay down with your spurs and tear the sheets!’ was the jocular response.

‘Them’s ’em!’ rejoined the stranger, riding up to the fire and dismounting. ‘You see, boys,’ he continued, in a tone of easy familiarity, ‘I was jest about to camp myself over yonder a piece, when I seed your light, and thought if you warn’t Injuns, I’d ride up and jine.’

The new-comer received a hearty welcome from his fellow-travellers, and was invited to join them in their evening meal. He took care of his mule first and then gave his undivided attention to the inner man—putting away such a quantity of meat as proved him blessed with a keen appetite and great animal capacity. As soon as the eating was finished, pipes were produced, filled and lighted, and then the happy mountaineers were ready for conversation. First they had to exchange names and talk over the general news of the wilderness, and then they gradually fell to telling stories, narrating some of the most prominent incidents of their eventful lives. They formed a picturesque group, worthy the pencil of an artist, as they lounged around the camp-fire in their regular mountain costume, lazily blowing out little clouds

of smoke, the flickering flame flashing upon their bronzed features and heavy beards, and giving them a bold relief. They had all had adventures with Indians and wild beasts, and each one had his hair-breadth escape to relate. The last comer glorified in the soubriquet of Fighting Joe—a title he had earned, as he expressed it, ‘by al’ays pitching in at half a chance and coming out like a right bower.’

‘I come nigh gitting throwed onct, though,’ he said, ‘and I’ll jest tell you how it was. I was out, some years ago, and t’other side of the Divide, trapping on my own hook, like I am now. I’d got into a arthly paradise, whar beavers was coming into my traps like kittens to thar mothers, and I was piling them up day arter day jest as easy as rolling off a log. I was happy then, I tell you. I seed a good mule-load afore snow, and keerds and whiskey for my winter’s fun. I was proud a few you’d better believe. A big Injun with a brass ring in his nose, eagle-feathers in his scalp-lock, and a red blanket over his greasy shoulders, couldn’t hev out-strutted me then—no, sir! I’d got up a little shanty to keep my pelts and things dry, and when I laid in thar o’ nights I al’ays dreampt so’thing handsome. Whar mought you hev found a richer or a happier dog nor me then? Whar? No-whar, sir! No, sir-e-e! Wagh!

‘Wall, boys, one day when I came in from looking arter my traps, what did I see was gone? All my pelts. What else? My mule. What else? The blasted Injuns that tuk ’em. What was left? The shanty and thar tracks. Me, too. Yes, I was left. ’Speet they’d like to hev tuk me also, the thieving red-niggers! They’d got a big haul though, without my scalp, and ef they didn’t go off ehuekling over that thar plunder, why does calves beller?’

'Boys, that thar was an ongreeable surprise that made me as sick as a elam in a stew. I knows you won't think none the better of me for owning up to it, but the faet is, I sot down and cried like a gal lost in a eane brake. Yes, sir, that was what I done fust. I couldn't help it—I was so mad and felt so bad. I'd got my rifle, my ammunition, and the ha'r on my head; but all my hard 'arnings was gone, and my winter's whiskey, keerds and fun wasn't nowhars.'

'Wall, arter I'd had my ery out all to myself, I got up, stretched myself up like a man, hit my breast a hard rap, and swore I'd have revenge. Then I went to studying moceasin tracks to see how many scamps thar was. I made out six, and then I started arter 'em. Some other body mought hev gone t'other way—but I didn't. I wasn't named Fighting Joe for nothing—not me! I went arter the thieves.

'I travelled till night without ary fresh sign, and then camped without striking a fire. I'd got six days' feed of jerked meat in my wallet, and I 'speeted to do so'thing afore that was used up. I didn't sleep no great deal that night, and I dreampt of shooting Injuns, that turned into beavers and mules, and run away. When morning come, I tuk the trail ag'in and went forward like a hound. All that day I travelled like a dog on seent. Thar wasn't no trouble in follering the trail, for the red-skins felt safe ag'in one man, and didn't keer what marks they left behind 'em.

'But I didn't eoteh up to 'em that day nyther. Ef they wasn't afeard, they got over ground like Injuns as was. I slept better that night, and the third day I went for'ard like a streak of greased lightning. I was bound to foteh 'em that day or die. About noon I come in sight of a smoke, jest over a little hill. Thar was trees and bushes as grewed up to the top, and, skulking through them, I crept up cautious

and got a look. Yes, thar they was, down in a little grassy valley on the bank of a mountain stream, lounging about like lazy whelps; and thar was my mule, confound the beast, eating away as if nothing had happened.

‘Wall, thar was nothing as I could do then, and so I laid low, and waited and watched like a painter. When at last the greasy hounds sot off ag’in, I skulked arter ’em and when they camped that night they mought hev shot an arrow to whar thar was a white giutleman about the size of Fighting Joe. They thought they had the thing all their own way, and was purty merry over thar supper. They talked and laughed, whilst I put two bullets in my rifle, tightened my belt, seed my powder and balls was handy for a quick load; and my knife ready fur a draw.

‘At last they ail laid down without setting ary watch and went to sleep. I waited an hour or two, to make sure, and then crept down on ’em till I got purty close, and then stopped to calculate the chances. I’d a like to had ’em all in a row, so’s I cou’d shoot ’em all to onct; but as they was all laying loose, scattered all about, the question was, which should I pop first! May be I could take two! Perhaps I could! Thar was two laying near together, and I softly stole round to fotch ’em in a line. Ef I could kill two at one shot I knowed I could skeer four; and ef I couldn’t kill the hull of ’em, perhaps that was the best I could do. I made up my mind to this, ’specting to rush in with a yell, and hev a victory in no time.

‘Wall, boys, I drawed a bead on’ em and pulled trigger. Snick went the blasted flint—for them was the days of flints—and not a single flash. The noise woke up the varmints, and up they jumped, yelling like mad. Afore I could git away, they seed me and gin chase. I run about ten rods, tripped ag’in a stick, and pitched headlong over a

log. In another minute they had me, the yelling devils—had me as fast as a beaver in a trap—and I'd hev sold my scalp then for a chaw'r of tobacker.

'The fust thing they done was to take away my rifle, knife, and ammunition; and then, with kicks and blows, they dragged me up to the fire light, jabbering away like so many monkeys. I couldn't understand thar words, but I did thar signs, for they p'inted to my mule, and then got some of my pelts and rubbed 'em in my face, and I knowed by that that they knowed who I was. Then they throwed me down and tied my legs and arms, and had a heap of Injun talk over me, to settle what they'd do with me.

'Wall, they got the thing fixed at last; and what do you think it was? My blood biles now, when I think on't myself! Why, jest to strip me naked, whip me sore all over, and then tie me up agin a tree and leave me to starve to death, or be torn in pieces by some wild beast.

'They done it, the devils—yes, sir-e-e! They kept me in suspense all night, and the next morning I was put through in the way I've said. I begged 'em to kill me at onct, and jest as ef they knowed what I said, they made motions of a bear hugging me to death, birds pecking out my eyes, and wolves tearing me to pieces; and then they led my mule past me with all my pelts and things on her back, and went off laughing, leaving my scalp on my head, which was the strangest thing of all.

'After they'd gone I tried to break loose—but I couldn't stir a limb nowhar. I was bound agin a tree, standing up straight, with a bark rope all around me from my neck to my heels. After trying this a few, and finding it no go, I gin in, gin up all hope and tried to do so'thing at praying, wishing I was eyther free or dead—for standing thar to starve or be killed by some wild beast was awful, I tell you.

‘About two hours arter that, I was nigh skeered into a fit by one of the rascals that had helped tie me thar, jumping round sudden with a screech like a painter from behind the tree whar he’d skulked up without making the least noise. He’d come back for my scalp, and to hev some fun in torturing me, and this he made me understand by signs thar wasn’t no mistaking.

‘Wall, boys, thar I was, with no more chance of dodging nor I had of flying, and that thar infernal imp a flourishing his knife afore my eyes, and showing me by motions how he was agoing to lift my h’ar. What ef my blood did bile? what ef I did shudder? That was only fun for him—that was what he’d left the others and come back for.

‘At last he got ready, and I seen by the flash of his eye he was about to do it. I kind o’ groaned—I couldn’t help it—I was so downhearted to think I hadn’t no chance agin him. With a savage grin he came on, slapped my face a few times, and then tuk hold of my ha’r, gathered it up slow into his hand and swung his knife around a few times afore my eyes, jest to tease me and make me mad. Then he put it to my scalp, and begun to cut slow, to make the torture worse. I shut my teeth hard, shut my eyes tight, held in my breath, and prayed God I mought bear it like a man.

‘Jest then it was, boys, I heerd the crack of a rifle. I opened my eyes and seed the red villain dropping, with a ball right through his temples and blood on his face. I didn’t know who’d done it, but I yelled out with joy. Two yells come back to me, and then two white trappers come running up to me that I knowed. I cried then, boys—cried jest like a child, I did. They’d happened on my trail and the Injuns, and had follered on and come up jest in time to save me.

'Wall, arter they'd set me free and heerd my story, they scalped the savage and stripped him, and I put on his toggerly and tuk his weapons, and we all three started arter t'others. We come up with 'em about dark, waited our chance, pitched in, and killed the hull five. We got two scalps apiece, all thar weapons, blankets and gim-cracks, and I got my mule and pelts baek. I offered to divide the skins with my true friends, but uary one would they touch; and so you see, I had my winter's whiskey, keerds and fun arter all. That was the end of that serape. Augh! It was a purty tight fit, wasn't it? Wagh!'

The three trappers remained together a couple of days, and then Fighting Joe took his leave of the two he had joined, turned off on a route of his own, and went forward alone, to new adventures, new perils, and it might be to a fearful death.

THE BANDITTI OF ITALY.

(From the unpublished MSS. of a Traveller.)

EARLY in the evening of a fine summer day, we arrived in the little village of Sorica, situated in the midst of mountains, and elosely nestling itself beside a small glimmering lake, the surface of which was at nearly all times dotted with the boats of fishermen and pleasure-seekers.

The situation of the village was charming and romantic in the extreme. Tradition had handed down many tales of its beauty and renown in earlier days, when gallant knights had performed the most daring prowess to win

the favour of some transcendently beautiful mountain maiden.

The fame of Sorica had reached me long before I reached the place, and I was prepared for a truly romantic picture. Nor was I disappointed. Before I reached the place I heard the soft tinkling of a guitar, reminding me of the times when stern warriors and iron-cased knights became wandering minstrels in order to gain the heart's affections of their beloved. A loving couple sauntering affectionately side by side, almost completed the illusion, and it required but a little stretch of the imagination to picture the swain a valiant warrior, the damsel a love-sick daughter of a cold and unapproving father, and so on, till the whole be invested in brain-work, belonging properly to the novelist alone.

Leaving the amorous twain to pursue the bent of their own inclinations, I hurried forward and was soon in the village. My first care was to find the inn where I was to pass the night. Nor was this a difficult task. An accommodating labourer readily pointed me to the structure, which I was soon convinced was worthy the place and all the patronage it would be likely to receive.

The landlord was a jolly, good-natured Italian, just turned the shady side of forty, full of good feeling and ready humour, which was liable at any time to expand into one of his peculiar jokes, after which he would sit for a long time indulging in silent merriment, occasionally interrupted by some pleasant and appropriate remark suggested by the subject. All in all I seldom ever met a more agreeable host than mine of the Sorica inn.

To my peculiar satisfaction he also spoke in French nearly as fluently as Italian, which greatly assisted in our conversation, as the latter was a language of which

I knew very little, while French was nearly as familiar, to me as to my host.

Before the evening meal was prepared I sauntered out to view the lake and scenery more minutely, in which manner I passed an hour most pleasantly, and half unconscious of the flight of time. A glance at my watch showed that the time for supper had arrived, and reluctantly despite the cravings of appetite, I turned towards the inn.

After the meal was despatched I seated myself behind an open casement, the better to enjoy the sunset scenery, and at the same time my cigar. In a few moments mine host seated himself beside me, when the conversation very naturally turned upon the scenery before us.

'It is beautiful,' he remarked ; ' but far more so to you than it can be to us, who have passed all our lives in the midst thereof. We know it is the most beautiful scenery in the world, and yet, in a great measure, we fail to realize it. Our mountains are famed wherever Italy is known for their robber hordes, and yet *we* pass into their wildest recesses without a feeling of fear. Even now, within twenty miles of us, an encampment, or band of robbers, are said to have taken up their abode ; but whose head rests uneasy upon that account ? Not mine, surely.'

'Quite probably 'tis only a flying rumour,' I remarked.

Mine host shook his head.

'That can hardly be,' he replied, slowly and with considerable meaning in his tone ; 'they have been seen, frequently, and only last week a passing traveller, like yourself, senor, was detained by them for nearly half a day before he was allowed to pass on his way. The captain saw him and conversed with him on every topic proposed, making no secret of the number of his men, his intentions, or his past victory.'

‘And, pray, did you learn his motives, or aught of his history?’ I asked, removing my cigar in anxious expectation.

‘Certainly. I learned all he communicated to the traveller, and if you are a romantic person I will tell you the tale as far as possible; it may prove interesting to you.’

Of course I acquiesced. We removed our chairs from the window, and he commenced.

‘Antonio Vorgis was the son of quite respectable parents, though ranking only in the upper orders of the lower class. At an early age he conceived a passion, which death only could extinguish, for a young maiden of his own rank and station in society. For awhile all was well, till in an evil hour a handsome and accomplished French officer came to the command of the troops quartered in the city. The maiden of Antonio’s choice met his eye, and regardless of law or morality he easily found means to force her to accede to his wishes. Antonio soon learned of the disgrace of his beloved, and, stung to the soul, he vowed revenge. Hastily collecting a small band of followers, he left the city and established himself several miles distant, where he immediately abandoned himself to every species of crime. A reward was already set upon his head, but no one could as yet discover the exact location of his haunts. In all probability it would not be long before his small band would be extirpated, when safety would again be restored.”

Such was the story of Antonio Vorgis which my landlord related to me, and in the main it was correct. The tale, however, occupied him for nearly an hour, and in the course of that time he became fully awakened upon the subject of robbers and their deeds, from the time of the Knights Templars till the present.

As a consequence he was totally occupied in the re-

hearsal of all manner of legendary lore, concerning gallant knights, worthy soldiers, and daring desperadoes.

As he continued to warm with his subject, and became more and more interested the further he advanced, it is quite probable morning would have dawned upon us there, had I not suggested the expediency of a little sleep, in order to prepare myself and companion for the fatigues of the morrow's travel.

The companion here spoken of, and who is seldom mentioned, was, as appears by the earlier part of the MS., an Englishman, named Isaac Brooks, who, for some reason, had joined company with the writer, and accompanied him during the entire course of his travels, though from the manner in which he is usually spoken of it appears a reasonable conclusion he was regarded more in the light of a servant than a companion. He is described at his introduction as good-natured, agreeable, and somewhat simple, though brave and courageous in general.

Politely conducting us upstairs, and wishing us a good-night and happy dreams, our kind-hearted landlord left us.

Now, by nature I am not nervous, nor is my rest easily disturbed by any mental action, still I am free to confess, that that night was far from comfortable. No sooner did my eyelids close than I was in the realms of fancy, mixed up in strange scenes of turmoil and confusion. Robbers, murderers, assassins, thieves, soldiers, knights, and maidens were so mixed in inextricable confusion, as to drive all idea of sleep or rest from my brain. In vain I attempted to divert my mind by thinking of other scenes and characters far away; in vain I turned to this side or that, assumed the easiest position possible, or, as a last resort, arose and endeavoured to compose myself to sleep in a chair. All

would not do. There is an old and homely maxim, "What can't be cured must be endured!"

Quite likely that was the reason why I was enabled, after several hours of restlessness, finally to enjoy a few hours of comparatively quiet slumber, which endured till I heard the pleasant, ringing voice of the landlord summoning us to breakfast.

'Come, signors,' he cried lustily, rapping at the same time upon the door; 'it is time a warm, hearty meal was inside your stomachs, which now waits below; and if you will have the goodness to arise and dress, the best the place affords shall be at your service, remembering always, signors, that the choicest slices are always purchased at the greatest cost.'

Glancing from the window, I saw the sun was already just above the summit of the mountains, so hastily donning my attire, we were soon seated at a hearty breakfast in the secluded eating-room below.

While we were dispatching the edibles set before us, our host gave us another piece of startling intelligence.

'Only the day before, the newly established banditti, under Antonio Vorgis, had wantonly shot a French soldier, who was hunting in the mountains, desperately wounding him, although owing to the apathy of the intended assassin, he escaped with his life, and succeeded in reaching the garrison in the city. Excitement was on the increase, a grand expedition was talked of to rout, and, if possible, destroy, the dastardly daring robber horde.

'It was certainly,' he continued, 'extremely dangerous for us to attempt to reach the city by the usual route, which was the most frequented by the banditti, and in order to take any more secure road, we should be obliged to retrace our two days' journey last made, and this would place us

four days' travel from Mili—this was the name of the city.'

Of course I could not think of this, as I was already tired of travel on foot, and anxious to reach a place where I could avail myself of a public conveyance. Therefore, notwithstanding my host's remonstrances, I examined my pistols, shouldered my portmanteau, and set forth upon the way. I confess I little liked the idea of danger, but I preferred it to a long travel of six days on foot when one would complete my pedestrian travels for the present.

For the first few miles our route lay over a most delightful section of country, abounding in the most beautiful and romantic scenery, reminding me of the Italian landscapes I had seen, more than any previous section of equal extent I had travelled.

Added to the natural beauty of the scenery, the air was fresh, soft and balmy, productive of much mental as well as bodily buoyancy. The road was smooth, generally level, and free from dust. Birds sang upon every hand, herds and flocks were occasionally seen at a distance, and it required but the company of a few congenial fellow-spirits to render my journey one of the most pleasant I had ever undertaken.

By degrees all thoughts of danger vanished, and when I had completed half-a-dozen miles I scarcely thought of robbers, except as creatures of fictitious existence. My feelings on this subject may well be compared to those of some sensitive person who treads on the ground covered by some powerful work of fiction, and who may half imagine himself surrounded by the beings whom the brain of the novelist alone has contained.

We had travelled six or seven miles since leaving the village of Sorica, during which time not a living person,

with the exception of a small shepherd boy, had been seen. The solitude in this respect was becoming monotonous, notwithstanding the richness and variety of the scenery around ; and it was therefore with pleasure that I beheld, on rising a small eminence, a solitary individual at some little distance in advance, leisurely walking in the same direction with ourselves. Quickening our pace, we were only a few minutes in overtaking him.

He was a young man of quite prepossessing appearance, tall and strongly built, with jet black hair, whiskers and moustache. In his hand he carried a rifle, the only weapon in view. His dress was that of a civilian, and his manner and appearance indicated one accustomed to refined and genteel society.

Turning as we approached, he frankly saluted us in the purest Italian, when, thinking it possible he might speak French, I addressed him in that language.

Instantly I saw a dark cloud pass over his brow, and although he replied in the same language, still I saw it had given him a deep and settled displeasure ; the reason, of course, I did not know.

“ You are not Frenchmen ? ” he inquired, scanning our faces closely, while his own wore a look of doubt and uncertainty.

“ Certainly not, signor,” I replied, in Italian. “ I am an American ; my companion is an Englishman.”

‘ Why do you speak in French ? ’ he asked.

I gave him the same reason the reader already knows, my inability to speak or readily understand Italian.

‘ I can speak the language,’ he responded, ‘ but the people as a nation I despise. Alas ! poor Italia ! how much longer shall foreign usurpers hold dominion over thee, and over the rights and liberty of thy people ?

Excuse me,' he continued, after a short pause, smiling, but with a tinge of bitterness in his tone, 'if I speak too freely, or more as a true Italian should speak than may seem agreeable to your ears ; but, signors, when you have received from cruel, unjust Frenchmen the injury and insult *I* have done, then will you speak and feel as I feel.'

At that moment a conviction burst across my soul. My newly found acquaintance was no other than Antonio Vorgis, the robber captain, the outlaw !

As the thought flashed across my mind, I took another and closer inspection of his features. There could no longer be any doubt in my mind. He was young, handsome, with black hair and eyes, tall, well-proportioned, and apparently very strong in build. All these were the characteristics of Antonio as I had heard him described, and I now wondered I had not recognised him before. I looked again. There could be no mistake. Words from his own lips could have made me no surer of the fact than I now felt.

Here then was a discovery, and one worthy attention. How should we proceed? What measures adopt? We were two to one, all of us armed. He was evidently the weaker party. We had no desire to do him any harm, having far more sympathy with him than with his enemies. Besides, how many of his companions might be within calling distance we could not possibly even surmise. I resolved if possible to draw him out.

'Signor,' I said, approaching close to his side, in order to note the workings of his features, 'there is one man in this vicinity with whom I should like to meet.'

'And he is?'

'Antonio Vorgis.'

'A sneaking, prowling highway robber,' he exclaimed,

with such a genuine expression of scorn that for a moment I almost doubted his identity.

‘Nay, friend,’ I said, without any dissimulation, ‘he is not such, but a noble, much-abused man, whom favoured minions would trample in the dust. If I held the power he should to-day shoot the pampered officer who is the cause of all his ill-fortune, and, furthermore, he should drive every Frenchman from sweet Italy.’

‘Thank you! May the Virgin bless you!’ he fervently exclaimed, as he grasped my hand within his own. ‘Know that I am Antonio Vorgis, the dreaded robber! the murderer on whose head a price is set! who never murdered, and only robbed Frenchmen enough to support our company, and my men whom I have hired.’

‘Have hired? And for what purpose, if I may presume to ask?’

‘Certainly. I have hired twelve men to personate robbers, to walk about loaded with weapons, and to now and then lay a contribution upon French soldiers, as they are so foolish as to pass within our territory, which is forbidden ground for the accursed race unless they *pay!*’

‘And your final aim is?’

‘Revenge,’ he whispered. ‘Oh, I shall know no more pleasure till that fated officer has breathed his last, then *one* sweet joy will be mine!’

‘But how, at this distance, do you expect to secure what you so fondly dote upon?’

‘Before long you will understand my intentions.’ Here he placed the muzzle of his rifle to his lips, and blew, producing a low, hollow sound. ‘Meanwhile, signors, I must ask you to assist me. Remember it must not be done willingly, but by force of arms. Do you understand?’

I did understand perfectly, and my companion the same.

Quickly the robber dropped his rifle, and drawing forth two concealed pistols presented one at each of us.

‘Stand, as you value your lives!’ he exclaimed in a loud tone, while at the same time half a score of men, armed to the teeth, sprang into the road.

‘Away with them, my men!’ he exclaimed, savagely. ‘We will march them to Antonio’s castle, and there we will dispose of their business shortly.’

Away we started, plunging up the mountain side. These robbers walked in advance. Isaac with one upon either hand came next. I followed in similar plight, while the remaining three brought up the rear. The captain stalked gloomily along, speaking a word to no one, and almost causing me to doubt whether we were prisoners in appearance or reality.

However the case might be there was no help for it now. We proceeded as silently as thirteen men could walk over rough, uneven mountain paths. I observed, however, that we kept parallel to the road, and at no great distance.

We all marched in silence for nearly half a mile, when suddenly the robbers turned directly up the face of the mountain. Following this route for nearly ten minutes, as well as I could judge, the entire party stopped short in front of ‘Antonio’s Castle,’ as the rendezvous of the robbers was called.

An old castle of feudal times had once stood upon the place, the ruins of which were still plentifully scattered around, and from which a small but secure fortress had been constructed by the banditti.

Here we were politely requested to deliver up our arms, a request with which we quickly complied. After securing our pistols, and satisfying themselves that nothing else was concealed upon our persons, a signal was given, and we

walked in at the open door, which was immediately swung to with a heavy, grating sound.

No one had followed us, and as the heavy bolts were shot into their places, I turned and surveyed the interior of our prison. There was but little to interest a superficial observer. Four heavy, square walls of stone rose to the height of seven feet, covered with light timbers, so closely arranged that all hope of escape by men in our condition was cut off, while at the same time the closeness and confined air of a real prison were evaded. If the place was intended as a means of confinement it was admirably planned, and in my heart I thanked the unknown designer, whoever he might be. The door was a single block of stone, fitted to an opening in the western wall, which could be bolted upon either inside or outside to suit convenience. When the bolts were removed the block fell outwards, requiring considerable exertion of manual power to raise it to position. The walls were bare, the whole room in like condition, with the exception of one corner, where a rude couch was prepared with leaves and blankets. We threw ourselves upon it.

"Do you perfectly understand it all?" I asked of my companion in a whisper.

The honest fellow raised his eyes to mine, gazed an instant, and then rather hesitatingly he answered—

"Well, upon my faith, to be sure, I hardly know, I cannot think Antonio Vorgis means us any real harm. He seems only to think of plundering Frenches. Besides, he told a fair story, and I should mistrust nothing were it not for the peculiar manner he has assumed since we were taken. One thing is evident—either they are dull robbers or they were only playing, to allow us to retain our pistols till we reached this place."

We had not very long to wait for a solution of the enigma.

In a few minutes the unwieldy door suddenly prostrated itself outwards prone upon the ground, and our worthy captor, Antonio Vorgis, entered with a drawn sword in his hand. The door was immediately closed behind him, and with easy grace he approached us.

‘Signors,’ he said, smiling blandly, ‘I suppose you find few accommodations here.’

‘I have seen better,’ I replied, making a great effort to appear unconcerned and at my ease—an effort which I fear sadly miscarried.

‘Quite true, signors,’ he replied, in the same self-possessed tone, ‘quite true. However, they are all we can secure for you at present, and you shall soon have better. But now for business. Doubtless you know my object in this movement?’

‘Not fully,’ I replied.

‘Then I will enlighten you. When the false-hearted French soldier seduced the affections of my betrothed I swore a fearful revenge. Soon or never it must be accomplished. He is now senior officer in yonder city, and it must be his duty to lead the troops in all enterprises of any importance. He must by some device be induced to lead a body of troops into this mountain to drive my daring band of desperadoes from the face of the earth. I will watch my opportunity, and when they return it will be without a leader. Now is the time. You,” addressing himself particularly to Isaac, “must escape, flee to the city, tell all the marvellous stories possible, and lead a splendid force of French chivalry to this place to rescue your companion and extirpate the band. Can you do this as a favour for one who will reward you?’

‘The task, my good sir, shall be undertaken,’ Isaac promptly responded; ‘even common motives of humanity would certainly prompt me to undertake almost any enterprise for one so deeply injured as yourself.’

‘Then waste no words,’ Antonio hurriedly exclaimed, thrusting several pieces of gold into the hand of the other. ‘Spring for the door, rush out, reach the city at your leisure, and early to-morrow morning bring on your company of avengers. Go!’

The gallant fellow was quick to comprehend, and as quick to act. Springing from his seat he dashed at the heavy door, which, being purposely unbolted, fell easily outward, darted through the opening, and fled like a startled fawn down the mountain side. A sharp, quick volley of carbine reports caused me to startle.

‘Do not fear,’ observed Antonio, as he saw my emotion; ‘this is only for effect. Those carbines were only charged with powder, I never allow my men to use dangerous play-things.’

At this moment the door was again raised to its place, when, sheathing his sword, the so-called robber captain seated himself beside me and commenced an easy, intelligent conversation. He spoke of the present of Italy; poor, down-trodden, and abused. He enumerated the wrongs, social, moral, and political, which were heaped upon its devoted head, tending to crush out every germ of national spirit, feeling, or honour.

‘Men talk,’ said he, of the dissolute, reckless lives we Italians lead. They stigmatise us as a race more deeply imbued in sin and dishonour than any nation living. Alas, did they know, did they consider the deep, the terrible suffering heaped upon the people by these, our despotic and reckless masters, their only feeling would be one of grati-

tude that a single person escaped the direful contamination.'

Seldom have I heard a person speak with more spirited understanding or true eloquence. I felt the terrible stinging of conscience for having ever suspected his motives, and while I longed to see him a virtuous upright man, I could not but admire his deep, determined purpose.

From national he descended to speak of individual wrongs, briefly relating many of which he had taken notice among his own acquaintances.

'But,' he continued, 'no matter how glaring, how terribly wrong all this may be, it must be passed over in silence. We poor, down-trodden Italians can have no redress, while our oppressors gloat over our secret misery. But,' he added, convulsively seizing the hilt of his sword, "so sure as God grants me life, till yon tyrant seeks out my fancied stronghold, so surely shall they know there is one who can never bow his head submissively to the blow ; and oh, how I long for the dread moment to arrive !'

Rising from his seat he commenced pacing up and down the small apartment. In a few moments he ceased, and at the same time the ponderous door fell outwards.

Four men entered. One bore a large tray, upon which was arrayed a tempting display of edibles. This he placed near me, and retired while the others stood motionless near the entrance. Antonio advanced, and held a long, whispered conversation with them. As it was in Italian, and hurriedly conducted, I could understand nothing of its import. I saw much feeling expressed upon the countenances of all, which led me to judge it was a matter of no small moment.

At its close, Antonio drew forth a sum of gold, which he carefully counted, then handing it to one of the company, received in exchange a handsome double-barrelled rifle.

All grasped and kissed the hand of their leader, and in another moment had retired.

‘Now, signor,’ said Antonio, turning to me, ‘refresh yourself as well as possible. I have parted with the last of my men, paid them all their dues, and now I wait only the *denouement*, as novelists and play-writers have it. Count Montan, I will do him the honour to say, is a brave man, and will not allow his prey to slip through his fingers.’

But it is unnecessary to dwell. His plans were all laid, and well laid—they could scarcely fail to work. We passed the remainder of the day together, conversing upon various themes which presented themselves, retired to our humble couch together, and, although under circumstances little liable to promote repose, I have seldom, if ever, enjoyed a more refreshing slumber.

The morning dawned clear and beautiful. Antonio was the first to awaken, and quickly springing up he drew the bolts of the massive door. I had followed in his wake, and as the door fell outward, in obedience to the laws of gravity, we stepped out upon the outer earth. I would have spoken but I saw that my companion was leaning against the wall in a state of mental abstraction, and I forbore to disturb his reverie.

Occasionally his lips would move as if in communion with an invisible person, and anon he would pause and press his hand heavily upon his brow.

At length he became more coguisant of passing things, and in a few words gave me instructions in regard to the course I should pursue when the soldiery arrived. Of course I promised a ready obedience. I felt it impossible to do otherwise than he should direct.

Re-entering the scene of our last night’s lodging, he soon returned, bearing in his hand the rifle previously

described. This he now set about loading in the most careful manner. I confess I could not look upon these deliberate preparations for the destruction of human life without emotion, or without almost questioning the righteousness of the cause ; still I reflected upon the terrible villany of Count Montan, and the noble, devoted character of the avenger, until I am free to confess, nearly all traces of pity were banished from my heart.

‘Now, signor,’ Antonio exclaimed, as he finished driving home the last bullet, ‘now I am prepared. Should Providence favour me and allow my life to be spared, I will away to *your* native land where I may yet become a man worthy to be called a citizen of that great and enlightened nation.’

My feelings were too full for utterance ; I grasped the noble-hearted fellow warmly by the hand, and dashed away a tear as I thought how greatly were the chances against him.

As soon as the fresh morning breeze had given us an appetite, he conducted me around to the rear of the ‘Castle,’ where, in an apartment similar to the other, we found a quantity of food, to which we did ample justice. Returning to the open air we saw a company of at least a dozen shepherds and herdsmen passing at a little distance, singing an Italian mountain song.

‘There,’ exclaimed my companion, “goes Antonio’s robbers, returned to their own peaceful occupations. None knew their secret, and *they*, at least, can live in peace and quiet as far as possible under the dreadful yoke they must sustain. But this is the signal that the French are near at hand. I scarcely expected them so soon. Retire now and throw yourself upon their protection as an escaped fugitive ; then lead them here. In this way only can you serve me.

Farewell, signor. I hope we may meet again in this world but cannot expect it. Farewell; God bless you!

I once more grasped his hand, and as we parted he slipped several pieces of gold into my palm. I would have refused it, but already he was gone. I now knew no time was to be lost, and silently I stole downward to the public highway.

Scarcely had I reached it when I beheld the splendid column of French soldiers approaching at a distance. Hastening toward them and waving a handkerchief as a truce, I called upon them for protection.

‘Who are you?’ sternly demanded the captain, whom I at once recognised to be Count Montan.

I had but one answer to make. I informed him who I was, that I had escaped from Antonio Vorgis’ power, and demanded that he should lead on his soldiers to the destruction of the robber and assassin.

In a moment, Isaac was at my side, congratulating me upon my escape. Of course he understood it all, and there was nothing to be feared from his indiscretion.

Count Montan was not a man to be easily misled. He asked me questions innumerable, but seemed perfectly satisfied when I informed him that the same object was so near and his enemy alone, as he fancied, within his grasp.

The soldiers were highly elated, for they had learned to hate and fear the man who was the sworn enemy to their race.

As I chose to follow in the rear, I waited till the column passed. While this was doing, I had an excellent opportunity to examine more closely the features of the captain, who still remained conversing with me. From that moment I could not have chided the Italian maiden, for her momentary infidelity. Never had I seen a man who at first sight

evinced more soldierly and gentlemanlike qualities combined. Tall, with a majestic deportment, and at the same time easy and agreeable, all this combined with that superiority of position for which most females have such a decided partiality, would secure him the almost unlimited favour of the fair sex. Especially did I regret that one so favoured by nature should prove so unworthy.

But the soldiers marched on, and falling into my place in the rear, I followed to witness the issue.

In a few moments Antonio's Castle was in view. All still and quiet as the grave. A world of doubt and anxiety was passing upon my mind as the soldiery were slowly formed in the order of attack.

All my forebodings were dispelled, however, by the sharp crack of a rifle. Instinctively I glanced at the captain. He had been wounded in the left breast, and leaning with one hand upon his sword as a partial support, was pressing the other over the wound. But an instant intervened, when a second report sounded along the mountain side, and this time the fated soldier fell shot through the head !

The next moment Antonio leaped from his hiding-place and ran like a startled deer down the mountain. Away he flew, almost with the speed of the wind. A few more yards and he would be screened from the aim of the soldiers ! But this could never be. A score of muskets flashed upon the air, sending as many leaden messengers of death after the life-blood of the fugitive. I gazed anxiously, hoping to see him pass unharmed, but it could not be. With a tremendous bound he sank to the ground, quivering in the cold embraces of death !

It was with difficulty I could suppress tears, but I well knew the expression of any sorrow would only consign me

to a similar fate. I turned and gazed upon the prostrate form of the Frenchman. The horrible expression which rested upon the features caused me for a moment to doubt its identity. It was the same—my own eyes gave me ample evidence, and I raised the hand to feel the pulse. All was still. Antonio Vorgis had been sure in his revenge, but he had purchased it with his life !

While I stood regarding the inanimate form before me, a loud, triumphant shout from a distance broke upon my ears. Turning I saw a spectacle to chill the most unfeeling heart. One of the men had the head of Antonio upon his bayonet point, elevated as far as possible above his head, while the rest were rending the air with their shouts of triumph.

With a feeling of faintness I turned from the spectacle, and after thanking the lieutenant in lieu of the defunct captain, for his kindness, I turned my steps cityward, although requested in a very kindly manner to stay and enjoy the honour of a military escort.

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Of course the story of Antonio Vorgis may be an exception to the rule, but how often may not such exceptions occur? Alas, there exists in real life many others who suffer under wrongs like or greater than those of Antonio, and who, if gifted with his courage and determination, would likewise be denounced as outlaws and desperadoes. Especially if this is the case in Italy—earth's most romantic and beautiful country !

MARALA.

A LEGEND OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

YEARS ago, before the white man's adventurous tread had echoed on American shores, there dwelt in Minnesota, near the head-waters of the Mississippi, an aged warrior and chieftain of the Sioux, named Ristona, skilled in the chase and foremost on the war-path. In his youth he had been chosen chieftain of his tribe, and the numerous scalps of Chippewa and Winnebago that hung in festoons around the central pole of his lodge gave proof of his prowess and ability to defend his people.

For nearly half a century he had ruled, till his locks had become silvered over by the hand of time. His step, though firm, had lost its spring, and his glance, yet haughty, had become dim. Thus warned by nature, Ristona knew that ere long he must bid adieu to his people and depart for the happy hunting-grounds beyond the grave.

But one thing troubled his mind. Ere he departed this life, he wished to wed his only child, Marala, the daughter of his old age, to a warrior fit to become his successor as chief.

Among the bravest of his warriors were Korapsquin, the Black Plume, and Maneo, the Panther. But Korapsquin, though brave, wise, and well loved, was already married; therefore, after much deliberation, the old chief had determined that Marala should wed with Maneo, and that he should become his successor.

Maneo was a tall, athletic warrior, in the prime of life. His features were bold and coarse, his eyes bloodshot and fiery; he was fierce and reckless as a warrior, of venge-

ful disposition, yet he never had violated the laws of his tribe, and had often looked with wistful gaze on the fair form and features of the chieftain's daughter; though she turned from his bold gaze with aversion, with many others he had sought her hand of Ristona.

Thus matters stood on one summer morn, when Maneo departed from a long conference in the old chief's lodge. When he had departed, Ristona summoned Marala to his presence. She was tall, of well-rounded form, light and graceful in her motions, possessing fair features, sparkling black eyes, and long waving curls of glossy hue hung in profusion around her shoulders. Dressed in the wild and fanciful costume of her race, she presented a form that would now charm the artist's eyes.

'Daughter,' said he, "I called you hither that I might bid you prepare your garments for marriage.'

'For marriage!—and with whom?'

'With Maneo, the bravest of the Sioux. He shall become my successor, and you will become the chieftain's bride as becomes the chieftain's daughter.

Marala trembled with emotion.

'Father,' said she, 'I cannot wed with Maneo.'

'Cannot!' said he, rising and gazing on her with angry surprise; 'and why not?'

'I love him not.'

'Love! Ha! has any young brave been prating to you and turned your brain with his tales? Love you another?'

'Nay, I love none else; but Maneo is fierce and wicked. I will not wed with him.'

'Will not! By the great Spirit you shall! Ristona's word is pledged, and it never is broken. In another moon the feast of the new corn will be held, and you shall become

Maneo's bride. So no more love-sick folly, but prepar your robes as becomes Ristona's daughter, for wedded yo shall be !'

Ristona's encampment was beside the Mississippi, on the verge of his hunting-grounds. Far beyond the waters, on the eastern side, dwelt the Chippewa, the hereditary foe of the Sioux, though now the hatchet was buried and the calumet of peace had been smoked by their united council fires.

Wheu Marala left her father, the tears of bitter anguish flowed down her cheeks, for well she knew there was no evading his decrees. Anxious to be alone in her grief, she hastened to the river side, and entering a light canoe, paddled across to the shore of a small island in the middle of the stream, where she sat in her canoe pondering over her fate and lost in sad reverie, while the sun sank in the west till it became lost behind the dark clouds of a thunder storm that was rapidly rising.

Marala was first roused from her reverie by a startling peal of thunder, that broke upon her ears with tremendous roar. Glancing up at the clouds, she saw that a fierce storm was coming, and quickly plying her paddles, started for the main land. But hardly had she left the island, when the storm burst with full fury. The water fell in torrents, and the wind swept the stream like a hurricane, driving her canoe towards the opposite shore. In another moment she was capsized and plunged into the water ; her strength soon failed in buffeting the storm, and she was on the point of yielding from exhaustion.

When Marala started from the island in her canoe, a young warrior stood on the eastern shore of the river, half in a thicket watching her. He was tall, of athletic form, with fair features, though his large flashing eyes indicated that

his passions might be easily moved. His garments were decorated with beads and fringe, and a tuft of eagle feathers surmounted his scalp locks; in his belt was a tomahawk, and his bow was slung across his shoulders.

When he beheld the maiden struggling in the agitated waters he plunged in and swam rapidly to her aid. Once had she sank ere he reached her, but when she rose he seized her with one arm and struck out vigorously with the other for the shore, which he soon reached, and laying his fair burden on a grassy mound, knelt by her side till she recovered.

In a few moments Marala gazed upon the features of her preserver, and said, "Many, many thanks, strange brave, for your kindness; but for your aid I should now be in the spirit land."

'No thanks are due, fair maiden; 'twas my duty both to you and the Great Spirit; but who art thou? I would know whose life I have saved.'

'I am Marala, daughter of Ristona, chief of the Sioux!'

"Ha! thou art Ristona's daughter. Your name has reached the ears of my people before.'

'Of your people? Who then are you?'

"I am Leno, a chief of the Chippewas.'

Marala started, for she had heard his name at the council fires of the Sioux.

The winds had now driven her light canoc to the shore; pointing to it she said—

"We probably shall never meet again, but the Sioux maiden will ever remember Leno with kindness. Farewell!'

'Nay! be in no haste; there is peace between our people, I would converse with you. Your eyes are red with weeping, and you have been sitting sadly in your canoe since the

sun was high in the heavens ! What sorrow weighs on the maiden's heart ? Nay ! be not offended. I ask in kindness.'

'Tis hardly fit for me to relate my sorrows to a stranger, and one of another people.'

'Tis well. I meant no offence.'

'Yet I will tell you. I am about to be wedded.'

'Methinks it should be cause for rejoicing instead of weeping.'

'But against my will.'

'Maidens often do. With whom ?'

'He is a brave warrior, but I like him not. His name is Maneo.'

'Ha ! the Panther ; I know him well ; he scalped three women of my people when the hatchet was buried. He is a snake. But see ; yonder are the Sioux braves seeking for you ? I must not be seen by them. Will you meet me again on yon island ? I would converse more with you.'

'Aye ! four suns from now. Farewell !'

Leno stepped quickly into a thicket, while Marala entered her canoe and crossed the river again, when she met Maneo with several braves seeking for her, fearing she had been drowned.

During the following days the mind of Marala dwelt constantly on the handsome young Chippewa, and she felt a greater aversion than ever for her approaching nuptials with Maneo.

The young buds of gratitude were fast ripening into the full-blown roses of love, and this child of the forest was fast learning the great law of nature, that hearts know no barriers to love.

When four days had elapsed she glided from the camp to the river side, and paddled across to the island, as Leno

had requested. The island was a long narrow ridge of land in the middle of the stream, covered with thickets and terminating at the lower point in a high, bold rock, surrounded with dense foliage.

‘Welcome, Marala. I am happy that you have granted my request,’ said a voice that sounded sweetly on her ears as she stepped ashore, and looking around she saw Leno standing before her behind a small cluster of evergreens.

‘I could not refuse a request so easily granted.’

For a time they sat engaged in various converse. At length Leno said, ‘How fares your nuptial suit with Maneo? Pardon me for intruding on your private joys or sorrows, but I had become interested in your tale when we were interrupted.’

‘Alas, I fear there is no escaping my father’s mandate.’

‘’Tis easily done.’

‘How? Oh, tell me how!’

‘Listen, Marala, and believe. Since first I beheld you, but four days ago, I have pondered on your beauty and fate, and I come to offer you my first young love, pure as the snow that ever lies on the western summits. Become my bride! Fly with me to the home of the Chippewas, and a thousand of my braves shall defend you from Maneo’s pursuit. Our land is large. We can go to the shores of the great lakes, and there you can dwell in Leno’s tent in peace and safety, the bride of his heart, and pride of his people. What says the Sioux maiden? Will she become a Queen of the Chippewas, or shall Leno return heart-broken in sadness.’

The rich blood had mounted to Marala’s cheeks, and her eyes sparkled again with joy. She placed her hand

gently in his, and raising her eyes uttered an exclamation of alarm which was followed by one of anger.

Leno bounded to his feet, and before him stood Maneo with hatchet uplifted.

‘What does the Panther behind my back? Would he spring like his namesake from behind on one who harms him not?’

‘The Panther comes for vengeance. Know you not this maiden is to be my bride?’

‘Not yet—some better fate should be hers.’

‘Twill not be linked with yours, so begone from my presence,’ replied Maneo, as he raised his tomahawk, ‘or I will fling your corpse into the river.’

Leno was unarmed, his bow lay on the grass near by, but measuring his rival’s form with a glance, he bounded into the air, and came down with full weight on Maneo’s head, crushing him to the ground.

In an instant he wrenched the tomahawk from his grasp, and raising his fallen rival by the scalp-lock, said—

‘Begone, yourself! cross my track again, and your scalp shall hang in Leno’s lodge, where now ’twould go, but there is peace between our people.’

Maneo leaped away, giving a shrill cry, and in a moment half a dozen Sioux braves bounded from adjoining thickets and rushed to capture the lone Chippewa.

Leno saw his peril and seizing his bow, whispered to Marala—

‘Meet me on yon rock on the eve of the full moon,’ and then leaped forward to meet his foes ere they gathered together.

Breaking through their line, he buried Maneo’s hatchet in the brain of one, then shoving it in his belt, bounded away for the opposite shore of the island, with the rest in

full pursuit. Fortunately for him they had only their tomahawks.

As he reached the shore he turned, and drawing an arrow to the head, buried it in the bosom of one almost at his heels, and slinging his bow across his shoulders, plunged into the stream, just as a tomahawk whizzed by his ear. Swimming rapidly he remained under water several minutes ere he arose. His head had scarcely sank again ere another hatchet splashed over his crown.

Thus diving and rising, he crossed the stream, and standing on the other shore, let fly an arrow in derision.

They dared not plunge in in pursuit, for well they knew his arrows would pierce them ere they crossed. So Maneo and his braves re-crossed the island in chagrin, to find Marala returned.

Ere long after she arrived, she heard Maneo enter her father's apartment in the lodge, and lightly removing the buffalo robes that formed the partition, she listened to his tale.

'Listen, Ristona,' said he, 'and hear how the Chippewa has unearthed the hatchet which we have buried. Two of our braves have been slain in rescuing thy daughter, the peerless Marala from captivity to Leuo, their chief.'

'Ha!' exclaimed Ristona, raising himself to his full height; 'when did this occur, and where?'

'On yon island. I, with some other braves, beheld Marala going thither, and ere long saw her made captive. We hastened then as soon as possible to take the insolent Leno's scalp; but he escaped us, piercing two of our braves with his arrows. We could not well pursue him across the river as we had but our hatchets.'

'Tis not best to urge war again for an individual act; but know you what would be done if I possessed the

vigour of my youth? Leno's scalp would soon hang in my lodge.'

'And by the Great Spirit, it shall as it is!' said Maneo, in a bitter tone. 'Ere the annual feast, I will return and lay it at your feet.'

'Tis well. Then shall you receive the hand of Marala as your reward.'

Maneo returned to his lodge, armed himself thoroughly, and silently departing, was soon treading the forest mazes in the land of the Chippewa.

Marala had listened to the lying words of Maneo, but she dared not reveal the true state of matters to Ristona, therefore she passed many a weary day in fear lest Maneo's threat should be fulfilled.

Meanwhile, let us turn to another scene. Two weeks have passed since Maneo departed. 'Tis a bright, pleasant evening, for the moon is growing again. Beside a small lake, deep in the forest, is the camp of a hunting party of Chippewas, and approaching it with the body of a deer thrown across his shoulders, is a young warrior. Let us glance at his form and features. Surely 'tis Leno.

But look, from behind a tree there glides a form as he passes, and with a bound is at his side. Another moment and a tomahawk is buried in his brain. The scalp is immediately snatched from his brow, and Maneo, for he it was, glides through the forest with his long sought for prize.

'Tis the day of the full moon—the morn of the annual feast. All is bustle in the camp of the Sioux. At an early hour a loud and peculiar whoop announced the return of Maneo. He proceeded at once to Ristona's lodge, and presenting the scalp of Leno, said—

'Behold the accomplishment of my vow!'

'Tis well, 'tis bravely done ! Ristona will soon be gone. To-day he will proclaim the name of his successor to his people, and to-night Marala shall be your bride. So now prepare for the feast.'

Maneo departed with his features wreathed in smiles of triumph.

Ristona summoned Marala, who had fled when she heard Maneo approaching with his trophy, and said—

'Maneo has returned with the scalp of the perfidious Chippewa who would have made you captive. Will you now become his bride? To-night I have ordered your nuptials to be held ; so let us have no more folly.'

'You shall be obeyed. To-night I will become a bride.'

'Then all is well, and I am at peace.'

As Marala hurried away she murmured to herself—

'Aye, I will become the bride of death ! Never will I be a slave to the murderer of Leno. I will away to the rock where we were to have met. From thence, 'tis a short road to the spirit land in the waters beneath. So Maneo will be balked.'

And firm in this resolve she arrayed herself in her richest costume, and moved gaily among the feasters during the day ; but when the shades of evening began to fall she quietly left the camp, and entering her canoe hastened to the island.

Maneo noted her departure, and, with a few companions, was soon following her course.

As Marala stepped upon the trysting rock, firm in her resolve to cast herself into the waters, she saw a form advancing to meet her. She gazed a moment, trembling. The form, the features, were his ! 'Twas Leno's shade ! With a low cry she sank fainting at his feet. Ere long she

recovered, to find herself clasped in his arms, and beheld no spirit, but Leno's self.

'How is this?' murmured she. 'My heart has been sad, for I thought you dead.'

'Never! It was my cousin that the Panther murdered. Leno dies not by his hand, but will live to bear away his bride. Can you now refuse to become mine?'

'Yours alone, or death's! But let us away or I shall be missed.'

Even as she spoke Maneo appeared before them.

Maneo uttered a cry of terror.

'Who or what are you that appears here with my bride?' he shouted.

'I am Leno's shade, come from the spirit land for vengeance. Thou shalt return with me,' and hurling his hatchet, with the Indian's unerring aim, he cleaved the Panther's head in twain.

Then facing the rest a moment, as doubting his immortality they prepared to test it with their arrows, he placed his arm around Marala and plunged over the precipice.

The Sioux peered over the edge of the rock; they beheld the ripples on the water, but no maiden or lover ever crossed their vision. Awestruck they returned with their tidings to Ristona. The old chief heard and sank beneath the stroke. Ere morn he too was in the spirit land, and the united council proclaimed Korapaquin his successor.

Meanwhile, when the council fires of the Sioux had burned out and all was still in their camp, a light canoe glided from beneath the thick foliage that hung around the island rocks, and turned to the eastern shores. In it were Leno and Marala.

The young Chippewa knew of a cave underneath the

rock, and when he plunged with his fair burden into the waters he rose in safety within it.

Ere another moon had passed he had borne his bride in safety to the far off shores of the great lakes, where they dwelt many a year in peace and happiness.

THE FROZEN WATCHER.

FROM the deck of the whaling bark *Centreville* the morning watch beheld the fog, which for a week had shrouded the ice-covered waters of the Arctic Ocean, roll heavenward in thin, fleecy clouds, pierced by the rays of the rising sun. Far and near, first revealing their dim outlines, and gradually becoming more clearly defined, the huge floating bergs were seen like phantoms, tossing their restless summits as their bases were washed by contending tides.

‘Man the mastheads!’ shouted the captain, as he emerged from the cabin, ‘and keep a sharp look-out for the lost boat!’

The boat to which he alluded was the second mate’s, which had now been absent from the bark for eight days.

‘It’s my opinion,’ remarked an old grey-headed tar forward, ‘that we’ll never see that boat again. This is the third time that the second mate has been lost sight of, and it’s the third time that always brings things to a crisis, accordin’ to the song, which says—

“Twice lost, twice found;
The *third* time dead and drowned.”

‘Ay, ay, Ben,’ answered his chum, Ned Brunt. ‘I’m afraid you’re right, though I can’t help hoping we’ll see the boat again. There were some good men in that boat.’

‘So there was, lad; so there was,’ replied Ben, ‘and it’s sad to think that they’ve all perished. The second mate was never a careful officer. He always had a fancy for going off on his own course—for getting separated from us when we lowered for whales—and *now* you see what’s come of it. His boat is lost, and with it six good men.’

‘P’raps they’ve been picked up by some other craft, said Ned.

‘That *may* have been,’ replied his chum, ‘but I’m afraid that no such good luck has happened; for the craft here-about aint very plenty. We’re as high up as seventy-one degrees north latitude, and there ’re few whalers that come so far.’

By this time the fog having almost entirely cleared, the greater part of the *Centreville’s* crew had posted themselves in such parts of the vessel as afforded the most extensive view of the sea. The tops, the top-gallant yards, and the flying jib-boom, were blackened by the forms of the men, who, leaning sideways, forward and backward, scanned the vast waters with keen and anxious glances.

The first officer, who had climbed to the main top-gallant cross-trees with a good spy-glass, pointed the instrument toward a large floe to windward, and for a full quarter of an hour continued to scrutinize the floating masses.

‘Do you see anything, sir?’ inquired one of his companions—the fourth mate, whose brother was among the crew of the lost boat—‘do you see anything? If so, for God’s sake tell me, and——’

‘Ay, ay,’ interrupted the mate. ‘I *do* see *something*, but I can’t exactly make it out. Your eyes are keener than mine, and perhaps you will be able to tell *what* it is.’

The fourth mate took the proffered glass.

‘Where is it, sir?’ he inquired, after a moment’s survey.
‘I see nothing.’

‘Look a little more to the left—there where that berg looms up near the farthest edge of the floe.’

The fourth mate obeyed, and the next moment uttered a joyful exclamation.

‘It is a man—a man standing on the summit of the berg!’ he shouted. ‘For God’s sake, sir, inform the captain, and have a boat lowered at once!’

‘Are you sure it is a *man*?’ inquired the mate. ‘It looks to me more like a seal or a large bird.’

‘No, sir—I am positive it is a human being!’ cried the other. ‘I could swear to it; and there can be no doubt it is one of the boat’s crew—perhaps my brother.’

‘All right—we’ll lower,’ cried the mate, and quickly descending to the deck he ordered his crew to clear away the larboard boat.

The men obeyed, and the little vessel dropped splashing into the water.

A moment later, manned by good oarsmen, it was speeding swiftly towards the floe.

The latter on one side was walled by frowning ramparts and precipices of ice, that lifted their jagged, rifted summits high in air, and flashed with dazzling brightness in the rays of the rising sun.

‘Do you see the—the object now, Mr. Reynolds?’ inquired the mate, turning to the fourth officer who was stationed by his side.

‘The *man*? *Yes*,’ answered Reynolds. ‘Steady as you are, sir,’ he added. ‘We’ll soon reach the berg on the top of which he stands. God grant that he is my brother.’

As he spoke, a huge sea-bird, that for some time had been wheeling in circles above his head, screamed

ominously, and flapped its broad wings with a noise like the 'shivering' of a top-sail.

'I don't like that,' said Ben, who pulled the 'midship oar. 'I never knowed it to be a sign of good luck yet.'

'Hist!' gritted the fourth mate through his clenched teeth. 'No croaking now! A presentiment tells me that the figure perched upon the berg is that of my brother. What is to hinder us from getting him into the boat, I should like to know?'

'Hec-noo-hee!' muttered a dark-skinned Kanaka in the bow. 'Get into de boat! Me hab dream last night—bad dream—and me think dis dream come true.'

The boat was now so near the berg alluded to that the form upon its summit showed to all who glanced toward it the unmistakable proportions of a tall man. He was seated upon a projecting shelf of the ice, lashed with a rope to a crystal column behind him. His face being turned away from the approaching boat, could not be seen, but the foolish mate declared that he recognised the form and dress of his brother.

'That may soon be proved,' answered the first officer. 'He will probably turn his face towards us if we hail him.'

Accordingly both men shouted the familiar name; but the figure did not respond either by word or action.

The hail was thrice repeated, with no better result. The man remained as motionless as a statue, his head still turned away from the approaching boat.

A terrible fear crept into the hearts of the officers. They turned pale and exchanged uneasy glances.

'*Something's* wrong,' whispered Ben to the man behind him. 'I knowed that there was no good luck in store for us.'

At that moment the mate descried the fragments of

boat near the edge of the floe. One of the pieces of wood was picked up soon after, and found to bear the name *Maria*, painted in large red letters.

‘Ay, ay,’ said the mate, with a heavy sigh; ‘there can be no doubt now about the fate of the second officer and his crew. Here are the fragments of his stoven boat. The rest can be easily imagined. The men, with the exception of the one upon the ice cliff, have all gone down in their watery grave.’

As he spoke the boat struck the base of the berg, and headed by the fourth mate, several men scaled the rugged ice wall and sprang to the side of the motionless figure.

‘Brother! my dear brother!’ cried Reynolds. ‘We have come to——’

He paused abruptly. The face into which he peered was rigid and expressionless; the fixed, staring eyes were partially veiled by a thin glaze of ice.

‘Dead! frozen to death!’ cried Ben. ‘A sad fate! I knowed we’d have no good luck. Poor lad! poor lad! The only one left of that unfortunate crew, he probably came up here the better to keep a look-out for the ship, a-lashin’ himself with a rope that he mightn’t be tossed off. Well, mates, it’s easy to see what was the result. He fell asleep never to wake up.’

We have only to add that the lifeless form, being conveyed to the bark, was buried at sunset and that from that hour the fourth mate, formerly the merriest man aboard, became one of the most reserved and melancholy.

A WONDERFUL ESCAPE.

THE escapes of some of the Western pioneers from the Indians were so remarkable as to be almost, if not quite, miraculous.

The disastrous expedition of Colonel Crawford in the spring of 1782, is a matter of history. The colonel himself was taken by the Indians, and compelled to undergo the most excruciating tortures which their savage ingenuity could devise. A large number of his command were killed on their retreat and a few taken prisoners. On these unfortunate captives the Indians vented their most diabolical rage. They seem to have felt no mercy for any one connected with that unfortunate campaign. It was enough for them to know that a captive had been concerned in that wicked expedition to consign him to the most cruel death. In this there was a species of barbarous, poetic justice. The objects of that campaign were the murder and plunder of Moravian Indians—an inoffensive, non-resistant, Christianized sect—and the whites were defeated by brave, determined warriors, who nobly espoused the cause of their innocent brethren. If fearful and vindictive retaliation could ever in any case be justified, their own, under the circumstances, might be regarded as a fit retribution. There were, doubtless, many misguided men, not wilfully guilty of wrong, who suffered for the sins and crimes of others; but such is always the fate of war; the ignorant savages, with their fiercest and most vindictive passions aroused, could not be supposed to distinguish in individual cases; they acted under the circumstances according to the laws of their nature and their rude sense of justice; it was enough for them to know that the man

in their power had once belonged to the murderous band of whites ; and we think the impartial historian, with a clear view of all the facts before him, will find as little to condemn in them as in the previous deeds and unjustifiable intentions of their enemies.

After a pitched battle with the Indians, in which the whites were sadly defeated, we have said that many were killed on their retreat and a few taken prisoners. Among the latter was a man by the name of Slover, whose wonderful, not to say miraculous, escape from the final tortures to which he was condemned, we purpose to relate.

After his capture, Slover was taken to an Indian village, called Grenadier Squaw Town, to have his fate decided. This place stood in the centre of the celebrated Pickaway Plains, in what is now Pickaway County, Ohio, a short distance below the present town of Circleville, and on a small creek a little to the eastward of the Scioto river, into which it empties. The Grenadier Squaw, from whom this village took its name, was a large, muscular, masculine woman, of good intellectual abilities, but of an unprepossessing appearance. She was a sister of the chief, Cornstalk, whose village was on the opposite side of the creek, almost within hail. A few rods below the Grenadier Squaw Town was the council-house of the nation, and near it a small elevation, which commanded a view of the level plain for miles around. On this little hillock was set the stake of torture, and the flames around the burning victim could be seen by the savage inhabitants of the different settlements and isolated dwellings within a circuit of many leagues.

Slover was considered a great prize by his captors—a prize which would afford them both amusement and revenge. They therefore guarded him with great care, but

could not forbear to have a little savage sport with him in the interval between his capture and trial. It was their almost invariable custom, whenever a prisoner entered a village, either to remain or merely pass through on his way to another, to compel him to run the gauntlet previous to deciding upon his fate, and this Slover had been forced to do several times before reaching Grenadier Squaw Town.

This running the gauntlet was in itself no trifling affair, and many a stout captive has received his death-blow between the lines. Slover had been much beaten and bruised before arriving at his destination ; but the more fierce of the savages had been warned not to kill him, as that would be giving him an easy death and depriving the nation of a glorious holiday of amusement and revenge. At Grenadier Squaw Town, Slover was received with the most fiendish delight, and the last gauntlet was immediately prepared for him. Two long lines of men, women and children were formed, extending from the village to the council-house, which was a building much larger than the dwellings, and stood, as we have said, some distance below the others, on the open plain. These living lines were armed with sticks and clubs, and, as the unfortunate prisoner ran between them, they rained upon his unprotected head and body a succession of heavy blows, accompanied with infernal yells and screeches. Like their predecessors in this species of torture, they had all been duly warned against depriving him of life, and therefore he reached the council-house in a partially exhausted, bruised and bleeding state, but without any very serious wounds.

Once inside the council-house, according to savage law or custom, the prisoner was safe till after his trial ; and as Slover was guilty of the grave offence of belonging to the unholy expedition of Colonel Crawford, who had already

been tortured to death on the ground of his battle and defeat, the trial in his case was made one of the gravest importance and most impressive solemnity. All the great chiefs and warriors of the tribe were present, and after a brief interval Slover was condemned to the most painful of all deaths, by fire;—to be preceded by the torture.

The announcement of the result was received by the vindictive populace with screams and yells of fiendish delight.

The horrid execution of the poor captive was fixed for the day following his trial; and as he was being escorted from the council-house to an unoccupied log hut, which was to serve him as a prison, he was surrounded by a fierce mob of men, women and children, who vied with each other in heaping upon him the most coarse and vulgar abuse, and in striking, kicking and pinching him at every opportunity—all of which the poor fellow bore with a stoicism that would have done credit to an Indian brave. A number of the savages, in their intercourse with American and British traders and agents and white renegades, had picked up a smattering of English words, and these they now used with all the venom of their nature.

‘You poor squaw baby!’ cried an old hag, as she crowded up and struck him across the face with a stick.

‘You much squal in fire, like small pappoose!’ yelled another, giving him a blow with her fist.

‘How him like eat fire?’ screamed a third, as she pinched him with all her might.

‘White nigger eat fire!’ shouted several children in chorus, doing all they could to hurt, annoy and irritate him.

Slover made no reply to any, but bore all with a meekness and firmness worthy of a martyr.

On entering the hut where he was to pass the last night he ever expected to see in this world, the Indian guards of the condemned prisoner proceeded to bind his hands tightly together behind his back. Then making him sit down against a wall of the shanty, they passed a stout buffalo thong around his neck, and secured it to a log in such a manner, that he had no power to change his position. In this painful condition, without anything to eat or drink, he passed the long night of horror, his guards keeping wide awake and near him, occasionally making an examination to see that he was perfectly secure, and often taunting him about his unfortunate condition, and describing in the best English at their command the cruelties that would be practiced upon him on the morrow. What the feelings of the poor fellow were—away from home and friends, alone, a helpless prisoner in the hands of earthly demons—may never be known to any under less terrible circumstances. A doom to sudden death in the full vigor of life is supposed to be a fearful thing; but even that would have been a happy boon to one like him, condemned to the most excruciating tortures which the wicked ingenuity of a barbarous race could invent.

The morning rose clear and serene, and to the excited savages gave promise of a glorious day of sport. At an early hour they began to pour in from the different villages for miles around, and by noon an immense throng had collected, consisting of noted chiefs and warriors, aged veterans, and women and children, for it was intended to make the affair in the highest degree imposing. A good, hearty breakfast had been served to the prisoner, not from any feeling of compassion, but merely to increase his strength and power of endurance, so that the torture might be prolonged.

As the time drew near for the intended victim to be led forth to the stake, he was stripped naked, and painted black from head to foot; and then, as his guards conducted him to the elevated spot where so many, both white and red, had already suffered, the welkin was rent with the delighted screams and yells of the hundreds of both sexes and all ages assembled around the base of the burning ground.

At the very apex of the little hill was set a stout stake, to which was attached a rope several feet in length, which was now made fast to the prisoner's hands behind his back. This gave him a circuit of some ten or twelve feet in diameter to move about in, and outside of which was the circle of fagots, intended for the purpose, not of burning him to death, but of roasting him from head to foot in a slow and torturing manner.

Everything being now in readiness for the horrid work, the torch was applied to the dry fagots, and another universal yell of satisfaction rent the air; but just as the flame shot upward, there came a heavy boom of thunder, as if heaven were displeased at the cruel act; and the superstitious Indians, suddenly hushed to silence, looked up in surprise commingled with awe.

For the first time it was noticed that a black and angry cloud was rolling up in the west, from which issued fierce tongues of flame, each of which was quickly followed by heavy reports, that every moment grew louder and more threatening.

The attention of the savage Indians was now divided between the approaching storm and the prisoner at the stake; and as they noted the heaving and whirling clouds pushing rapidly and angrily forward, with the lightning flashing almost incessantly, and each successive report rolling over their heads with a heavier boom, their super-

stitious hearts began to fear that the Great Spirit was angry with them for the deed they were about to do.

The progress of the storm was uncommonly rapid. Scarcely had the flame completed its circuit, and before the anxious prisoner, standing at the stake in the centre, had begun to feel more than a slight glow of heat, when a fierce gust of wind sent the faggots flying in every direction, and the swiftly descending rain put out the fire. Amid the roar of a tempest most fearfully sublime, the alarmed spectators hastened to seek shelter in the village, and the reprieved captive, almost venturing to hope that kind Providence had interfered in his behalf, was returned to his prison.

The storm raged all the rest of the day and till late into the night; and Slover remained unmolested, but closely guarded, being reserved for a more propitious occasion. Late in the night his two guards fell asleep; and becoming aware of this, from their snoring, he made a desperate effort to get away. He was secured in the same manner as on the night previous, his hands tied behind his back and his neck fastened to a log by a stout thong. After a hard struggle he got his hands free, and then eagerly began to work at the thong about his neck.

At first he seemed to make no impression on it, and after labouring for an hour, he became greatly fatigued and began to despair. One of the Indians now got up and lit his pipe, and Slover trembled for fear he would examine his fastenings, discover his attempt at escape, and deprive him of the little hope still remaining. But the savage did not approach him, and in a short time he lay down and went to sleep again.

Slover now once more tried the cord about his neck, and, to his utter surprise, found it loose enough to slip over his head—a sort of miracle he never pretended to explain.

At last he was free ; and stealing softly out of the hut, over the very bodies of the sleeping Indians, he turned into a corn-field and ran for his life. Taking a zigzag course, he scarcely knew whither, expecting every moment to hear the yells of his foes in pursuit, he reached a high plain, where a drove of horses were quietly feeding. With the thong that had bound his wrists, and which he had brought away with him, he now hurriedly made a sort of halter, caught one of the animals, put it over his nose, mounted his back, and dashed away, just as day was breaking. He kept the horse at the top of his speed till the poor beast gave out, and then he left him and pushed on, afoot and alone, through the great wilderness, unarmed and naked.

Foot-sore, exhausted, and terrible lacerated by thorns and brambles, poor Slover at last reached a civilised habitation, and lived many years afterwards to tell the tale of his wonderful deliverance.

A TRAVELLER'S ADVENTURE.

BUSINESS urged and duty called ; obeying both, I found myself travelling the wilds of western Pennsylvania, with no other mode of conveyance than the back of my good steed Roland.

The date of my story extends several years back, into the period when that portion of our now teeming and prosperous state was naught save a succession of unbroken wilds ; when the silence of her depths was not broken by the snorting engine, as it puffed swiftly on its way opening the path to civilisation and prosperity. At that time, the country—at least, that portion of which I write, was very thinly settled, and those mostly inhabited by rough lumber-

men, who, at the head of navigation, and surrounded by the most luxuriant growth of timber, made it their business to float down yearly those immense rafts which are the wonder, even yet, of all who behold them. To one of these clustering little villages my errand, an imperative one, called me—and as circumstances would have it, I must need perform my journey alone ; and when the wild and solitary aspect of the country through which it was expected I should pass, is taken into consideration, it will certainly create no surprise, that I felt somewhat diffident about setting out upon a journey of over a hundred miles in length.

Nature, when viewed under different circumstances, causes, unnecessarily many and different ideas ; and although I might have been considered, perhaps, somewhat of a sentimentalist when in the presence of some of nature's grandest handiworks, yet I must confess that a night passed upon the mountains or in the depths of those dark forests alone, and surrounded by wild animals, and perhaps by wilder men, was not calculated, to say the least, to inspire one with a spirit of calm and sweet reflection.

It was toward the close of a particularly warm day in midsummer, and I had travelled rapidly all day, as I hoped to reach my destination by two more of such travelling at the farthest. I urged forward my jaded steed with hopes of reaching some place of shelter for the night, as I could perceive by the gloomy aspect of the heavens, as well as the distant mutterings of the thunder, that we were to be visited with one of those fierce and sudden storms which are frequent in that region ; and as I had a considerable tract of forest to pass through, I was extremely anxious that I might accomplish that portion of my journey before the storm came up. I now put my noble steed to his best

speed, the sky the while growing darker and darker, till by and by the light of day was almost completely shut out; it seemed as if everything was still with the premonition of the coming storm; not a breath of air was stirring; now and then a clap of thunder, heavier than the others would startle the silence into a thousand echoes, that rolled, and reverberated through the wooded dells.

Just as I entered the wood, a blinding flash and a reverberation that seemed to shake the very earth, warned me that the storm was at hand. Now, great drops of rain began to fall and monotonously to patter upon the leafy trees, whose bending boughs met and entwined themselves in a perfect arch overhead; by and by they came faster and faster, till I was completely deluged by the torrent.

I drew my coat more closely around me, pulled my slouch down over my face, and bracing my knees against my horse, I shut my teeth firmly together, and in the determination of despair, attempted to bear it as patiently as could be expected under the circumstances.

Such fortitude I would have exceedingly admired in the person of some other individual in the same condition, but, as it was, I must acknowledge that I felt anything but heroic. Therefore, with sullen grumbling at my fate, I tried to make my horse go at a more rapid rate; but it was impossible, as the darkness had now become so intense, while the forest grew thicker and darker, so that it was impossible almost to find my way.

I endeavoured to direct my horse, but believing it to be the wisest as well as safest plan to trust to the instinct of the animal to find the path which every moment I became more firmly convinced I had lost, I let my reins fall loosely upon his neck, and laid myself close upon his back, for the purpose of avoiding the outstretched limbs of the trees,

which threatened every moment to sweep me from my horse.

I left him, therefore, to his own guidance, hoping that he would lead me to a place of shelter for the night. The storm increased in fierceness, and the continual flash of the heavens, the roar of its artillery, as if the fiery hosts of heaven and hell were mingling in dire combat, were calculated to inspire me with awe and fear.

I did not mind indeed the rain, which was descending in perfect torrents, the thick branches overhead seeming scarcely to be any protection at all, for I was completely wet to the skin—and I had long ago made up my mind that I could feel no worse, so I took it easy enough on that score. But the close proximity of my precious body to some of the tall trees by which my route was surrounded, and the probability that some one of these being struck by the fiery tongues that flashed their wrath across my solitary way, was not calculated to inspire me, to say the least, with the most pleasant or contemplative thoughts; and I will own that my nervous system, already considerably excited, was in none of the most improved conditions, consequently I could not but feel some slight apprehension, and a degree of timidity, which, perhaps as circumstances might have occurred, would no doubt have bordered on an absolute fear. Now, I do not pretend, nor never did, that I am supplied with a superabundance of animal courage, yet I trust that I am not quite so arrant a coward, but that I can go through a fair share of danger with the same firmness as most men.

But if a night in one of those deep, dark lumber regions, in the midst of a fearful storm, the wild winds sighing and moaning like a human being in agony through the dark and secret recesses of the forest, the whole dark mass of wood suddenly lighted up by the bright flash of the lightning,

followed by a crash which betokened you that some tall tree has received the fiery bolt, and fills you with dread lest the next tree struck may be close at hand, thus jeopardizing your very life, the wild beasts with which the place is filled yelling their discordant cries to the chorus of the storm as they rush from covert to covert to hide themselves from its fury; the owl and its companions screeching their unearthly cries through the tree tops, above, around, and all about you; flash on flash, and peal on peal filling the dark wood with a sullen reverberating sound, that seemed to be continually roaring in one's ears; add to all this the not altogether pleasant condition of being wet through, and forced to remain beneath the pitiless pelting of the storm; together with the fact, which at every step became more apparent, that the road was lost—we say then, if a night passed in such a place at the time indicated, and under the like conditions, does not fill the soul of the traveller with dread at his lonely and exposed position, as well as disgust at his utter uncomfortableness, then we are free to proclaim that he has nerves of steel and a heart of iron; as for our poor frightened self, we thought if we could only have found the steepest kind of an inclined plain, that would have carried us direct to our journey's end, we would gladly have embraced the opportunity, and regardless of consequences, would have immediately slid down the said inclination.

The tempest now howled forth in its fury; great trees were uplifted from their beds, and the peeling crash mingled in dire confusion with the fury of the night. The winds sighed in solemn cadences through the leafy wood; all nature seemed in stormy combat; strange cries that awoke all the hideous echoes of the night, mingled in discordant refrain with the howl of the wild animals, as they screeched forth their unmusical sounds. The rain came

down in torrents; I was chilled, benumbed, and fatigued; I knew not where I was, and trusting alone to my horse, I was like one in a boisterous, stormy ocean, without chart or compass, beaten and buffeted about upon the mountain waves, hither and yon; the difference in this case being that instead of waves, I was buffeted upon the mountain top, and against trees and brush, instead of the open sea, which, perhaps, at that time, might have been more preferable. Never before or since have I experienced such a night, and may I be spared from undergoing another of the same kind.

But suddenly, as my horse turned into the path, the glimmering rays of a far distant light shone forth upon our way, and how like a beacon light, to the weary, storm-tossed mariner, did it seem; my noble animal, too, appeared to catch the feeling of renewed energy, for he pricked up his ears and started forward in the direction from which the light proceeded. It grew broader and brighter, and at every step cast a more friendly glare. But suddenly, while my eyes were fixed upon it with increased anxiety, it disappeared entirely from view. Now I began to despair; and for some time travelled on in complete darkness. I had given over all hope of seeing it again, as the conclusion forced itself upon my mind that we must have got turned round in our path.

But while my mind was troubled with these dark forebodings, my eyes, that were now strained to their utmost capacity, caught a faint glimmering ahead, and as we passed an extensive thicket, it burst into view, broader and brighter at every step; and as I persuaded my horse forward, and neared the place, I could plainly distinguish in the deepening gloom the outlines of a log cabin, and fastened in the window was a primitive lantern, the rays

from which had directed me hither. As I approached this isolated habitation, I could plainly hear above the roar of the storm, the voices of the inmates, together with the clinking of glasses, and the rattling of dice. From their ejaculations, I was confident that they were either very angry with one another, or in a state of hilarious enjoyment. I hesitated before requesting admittance, as I had my own notions about entering such a place. But as calm and cool deliberation under the immediate circumstances could scarcely be thought of, I therefore made bold to knock at the door, and patiently as I could, under the circumstances by which I was surrounded, awaited an invitation to enter.

The door was soon opened by a short, thickset individual, who carried a light in his hand, and held it high above his head, while with his other he shaded his eyes that he might get a better view of me. As I had no particular reason for standing there all night and being gazed at, I demanded shelter for myself and beast; the fellow stared at me a few moments with redoubled astonishment, as if the sight of other than those of his own kidney was a desperate marvel; then throwing open the door, in a voice between a grunt and a squeak, he bade me enter, which invitation I was not loth to accept. I discerned, after a hasty survey of the premises, that the establishment was made of roughly hewn logs; and further, that the inmates, as rough looking as their habitation, seated around a table, and surrounded by drinks and dice, were no less than gamblers, or at least a merry set of dram drinkers. They were all rough-looking, grizzly-faced customers, and from their *tout ensemble* I took them to be a free and easy set of lumbermen at first, as this was the season when the rafts were floated down from the settlements.

A pile of money was placed in the corner of the table, and it appeared to engross one-half of their attention, the other half was occupied in the delectable entertainment of guzzling bad whisky, the odour of which was enough to knock a temperance man down. Upon my entrance, they ceased their operations, and turned looks of inquiry and astonishment upon me. Seeing therefore by their looks that they wished to know my errand, I made known to them, in as few words as possible, that I was benighted, lost, overtaken by the storm. I demanded some food for my horse, and a bed for myself, winding up with an appeal to their tender consciences, by an offer of money in reward for their trouble. At the mention of that magic word, it seemed to act like open sesame, for a tall, gaunt individual, the host of this impromptu inn, arose and came forward, and offered to find me something to eat. As I was, however, more anxious to change my wet clothing, I declined his offer, and requested to be shown to a place of rest.

'Well, stranger,' said my companion, 'if you've a mind to sleep on a pile of skins, up in the loft above ye, why you are welcome to do so; and all you've got to do is just to say the word, and I'll find sum'at for you to eat.'

I thanked him, but still refused anything to eat; for to tell the truth, I much doubted the fare their larder produced, and reiterated my request to be shown to bed. The man took up one of the lighted lanterns in the window, and led the way up a steep ladder into the loft above, through a trap door that opened with a noisy creak. The room was bare and destitute of all furniture whatever, while loose boards laid upon the logs constituted the floor of this primitive dwelling. In one corner of the room lay a pile of skins, to which my host pointed as my place of rest for the night, and putting the light upon the floor,

turned to go down ; but when he had descended about half way, he stopped, and turning to me said, in an apologetic tone which I afterwards understood—

‘You musn’t get skeared, stranger, if the boys should make a row downstairs, because they are on a frolic, you know, and of course they will be a little, jist a little wild.’

Assuring him that I was too much fatigued to be easily awakened when once asleep, I bid him good-night ; and when he had fairly disappeared, I drew forth my clothes from a pair of saddle bags, which fortunately the rain had not been able to go through.

Somehow, I did not fancy the looks of this man ; nor in fact any of his men, and when I had ensconced myself in a dry suit, and buckled on a pair of good revolvers, I felt much better prepared for any contingency which might arise. I first thought of securing the door which opened up from the room below ; but I was considerably surprised, and I may say alarmed, when I discovered the fact that it had been quietly secured from below, and, I could not doubt, secured by my quondam host. Here was a dilemma. I felt that it would be worse than folly for me to go to bed and leave the locking and unlocking to the occupants below, and thus subject myself to their intrusions at their own pleasure. I determined to fasten that door, and keep it so till morning, at all hazards. I therefore looked about me for something wherewith to carry out the purposes of my plan, when my eye fell upon a pile of loose boards, which I quietly carried one at a time to the trap door, and deposited them upon it, and then, laying my bed of skins upon them, I determined, if possible, to gain some sleep ; and should my suspicions prove correct in regard to the sinister motives of the people in the place, I could not possibly be attacked without first being awakened by the disturbance of my bed in the en-

deavours of my enemy to enter my abode. I now took my light, and cautiously reconnoitred the establishment, for I wished to discover if there was any other mode of ingress; my efforts, however, proved fruitless in discovering any, for with the exception of a small window, which opened on the western side, there was no other aperture, and that being high from the ground, nor having any buildings within scaling reach, I felt secure on this score. I therefore blew out my light, and prepared myself for a visit into the land of Morpheus. But I could not sleep; it was a bare impossibility; for I experienced a vague feeling of danger constantly revolving around me. At times the keenness of our senses, under different circumstances, is largely and remarkably developed.

At the present time, from the influences of the circumstances by which I was surrounded, I felt that my safety was by no means insured.

Finding myself wakeful, I was prompted by curiosity to see what was going on below, I could plainly all the while distinguish the loud voices of the men, mingled with the raging of the storm, which still continued in all its fury. The boards of the floor being laid on loosely, I was enabled to see through the crack by getting on my hands and knees; and putting my face close to the aperture, I discovered mine host seated at the table, endeavouring to explain, or at least to impress upon their minds something of great importance, for they all appeared to be listening with the greatest of attention.

From time to time he would lay off his thoughts with true oratorical flourish; and he turned his eyes towards me and pointed up at the loft with his long, bony, grizzly finger, and grinned in such a ghastly, grizzly way, that I felt a cold chill run over me, and to penetrate to my very bones.

His companions appeared to agree with him, for they assented to his propositions with approving nods, and seemed to be in high glee, for they continually emptied their glasses, and laughed, swore, and were generally merry all round, and when they sought their beds, each tumbled and fell rather than walked towards his couch of skins.

Presently all was still and dark below ; and I concluded, after waiting some time, that they had fallen into drunken slumbers. There was nothing to be heard save the wild beating of the tempest as it raged in its might, that could possibly give me grounds for apprehension. I arose from my watch, and throwing myself upon my rough bed, attempted to catch, if possible, a faint yet sweet remembrance of the drowsy god. But I could not sleep ; I would doze and gradually begin to lose all consciousness of things around me, when suddenly some fierce wail of the winds, or a harsh reverberation of the thunder, would immediately awaken me, and put all thoughts or hopes of sleep to immediate flight.

My mind was now in that condition, when the nerves, being strung to their finest tension, are excited at the least sound. So every blast of the storm, and every creaking of the forest branches, filled me with an indiseribable fear. Finally, however, my weary and exhausted frame triumphed over my fears, and I gradually sank into a restless sleep.

I had lain thus I know not how long, when I was suddenly awakened from a frightful dream, by that consciousness which oftentimes the sleeper possesses in the midst of danger, and arose to a sitting posture upon the side of my impromptu bed.

The fury of the storm had well nigh spent itself. While in a state of doubt and uncertainty as to what I should need do, my attention was arrested by a sound proceeding

directly from above, and which appeared to be like a person walking on loose boards. I now discovered, or rather recalled the fact, that there was a ceiling above me, like the floor beneath, and possibly a small loft between it and the roof.

I listened, every nerve strained to its fullest capacity. It was not repeated, and I began to believe that it must be certainly nothing more than that produced by an excited imagination, and had begun to calm myself down, when I again heard it, and this time it appeared to be nearer and more distinct.

I loosened my pistols and prepared myself for the encounter, which I felt was now at hand. I suddenly heard a sound as of some one attempting to lift the flooring of the loft above. I was now confident that my foes had made their way into the little loft, by some means known only to themselves, and by removing the flooring, intended dropping into my room, and giving me a friendly reception, which perhaps they had omitted to extend when I first arrived.

A slight noise, and a stealthy movement in the same direction, as of some one walking in the room, convinced me of the strength of my suspicions. I now moved as cautiously from my bed as possible, and took my stand in the other corner of the room, and opposite the little window, so that I might see my antagonist when he should pass that spot. I surmised, and correctly too, that the intruder would first make for the spot where he supposed, of course, that my bed lay, as he had no idea that I had removed it from its original position. I understood the whole game, and remained perfectly still; so still, in fact, that I fancied I could almost hear the pulsations of my heart.

With my finger upon the trigger of my weapon, I waited

the development of events; but, as I moved my foot for the purpose of shifting my position, the board under me gave out a dismally dingy creak, that at once betrayed my place of concealment.

I felt as if everything was now lost, owing to this unlucky accident. I now detected a movement of my unknown enemy, and directly I saw his form pass by the window, with the stealthy tread of a panther about to spring upon its prey, I knew that he must be advancing towards me. Who shall understand the emotion that I felt at that moment? It was dark, totally dark, and an occasional flash of the lightning served only to make the darkness more intense.

The distant grumblings of the storm, as it died away, filled my heart with melancholy, and with fear; truly was my position anything but desirable—a crash—a loud fall—a terrible oath, and I knew that the villain had fallen over the barricade; without a moment's hesitation I fired my revolver in the direction from whence the sound proceeded; simultaneous with the report there arose a yell almost unearthly from that spot, and proclaimed to me that my bullet had found its victim. Immediately the room overhead echoed with the sound of advancing footsteps, and several followed their companion into the room. I now felt assured that the whole tribe were upon me. A voice I distinguished as that of my host, shouted to his fellows to fire into every corner of the room, and scarcely had the words issued from his mouth when the report of their weapons broke upon my ear, and several bullets passed me and lodged with a dull thud in the walls around and behind me. I was reminded by this salutation, that however friendly it might have been offered, it was nevertheless none of the safest, or most desirable positions in which to

find one's self; and consequently I sprang back still further into the corner to prepare myself to meet their advance; but as I did so, my foot struck one end of the floor boards; it gave way, and precipitated me violently into the room below.

For some moments I was completely stunned and bewildered; but I soon found myself able to arise, and crawling to the door, which I found unlocked, I stepped out into the open air. The cool, refreshing breezes seemed to inspire me with new energy and strength.

The storm had now ceased, and the heavens were beginning to clear off; yet an occasional flash along the quiet murky horizon warned me that it was yet at hand.

I immediately gave a peculiar whistle, which I knew if my horse heard, he would make his way to me if it were at all possible, and find me among a thousand. An answering neigh told me the place wherein he was confined. With hurried yet painful steps, for my fall was terribly severe, and I had hurt my ankle considerably—I reached the enclosure which surrounded my horse, and was soon upon his back; noble animal, how overjoyed he seemed to be at our reunion.

While I yet lingered, a blinding flash and a peal of thunder directly overhead, caused me to turn my attention toward the clouds, and I observed that another storm was coming up from the south. The rain began to fall, and the tempest increased in fury, and as I turned my horse's head to the face of the storm, a blinding flash, followed by a crash that almost deafened me, caused me to turn in my path, and as I did so, I perceived that the dwelling had been struck, as quite a sheet of flame was fast issuing from the upper stories of the establishment. Above the roar and crackle of the flames, I could distinctly hear the loud

and savage execrations of the robbers. There came a report, and a bullet fired, I suppose at random, flew uncomfortably close to my head. I now gave full rein to my horse; behind me the villains thundered on in wild pursuit, hallooing and firing till the wood resounded with their outeries.

My gallant steed bore me swiftly on, and the ground beneath me almost seemed to fly.

Oh, the terror of that night! I knew not where I was going; followed by a set of fierce and lawless men, bent on my destruction, and whose every shot flew within a short distance of my very life, and caused me moments of the greatest terror. The storm, after performing its act of retributive justice in burning down the nest of the villains, almost as soon subsided as it arose, and my ride now, as far as the weather was concerned, was perfectly satisfactory.

By and by we diverged upon a beaten pathway; now the race became exciting, much more so in fact than amusing. My noble animal seemed, too, to partake of the excitement of the hour; he never once faltered; but steadily and yet as swiftly as the arrow from the bow he sped along his course. We were gaining, I knew it, I felt it; how exhilarating the thought. Gradually the voices of my pursuers grew faint in the distance, and at last died away altogether. I now slackened my horse's speed and about day-break my eyes were gladdened by the sight of a clustering village, not far distant, nestling down in the valley so snug and quiet that it looked really inviting. I returned thanks to Providence for my deliverance. To my noble horse I also felt that I owed my life, for had it not been for his exertions I would not have been here to pen these lines.

I soon arrived in the village and found that I had gone out of my direct course some fifteen or twenty miles, and that the town of P——, which was my destination, lay some dozen or more miles right across the country. I thanked the villagers for their information, and gladly rode out of the place, for a more villainous set of people I believe I never saw ; while the very air seemed to breathe outlaws and robbers, consequently I felt much more at ease when jogging quietly along toward my journey's end. On the evening of the same day, I reached it, and was kindly welcomed by my friends, who listened with amazement at my story. I was much overcome by fatigue, having had no sleep the night previous, and travelling all day, combined with the excitement of the scenes through which I had passed, it is therefore not surprising that I relished a good night's sleep, which did me indeed an infinite amount of good.

I succeeded in transacting my business satisfactorily, and after remaining a few weeks I commenced my journey homeward, recruited in health and experience ; but minus a pair of saddle-bags that contained several articles of clothing, which of course were consumed in the conflagration. On my way back I had a pleasant companion, and although the same route was pursued, the journey was far more pleasant.

SIX MONTHS' NIGHT

CHAPTER I.

THE LOST SHIP.

On the 1st of October, 1860, there sailed out from Port Jackson—the harbour of Sydney, New South Wales—the brig *Kangaroo*, Captain John Scott, on a sailing and whaling voyage in the icy regions southward of the Auckland Islands.

In those parts the unwieldy and gigantic walruses or sea-lions disport and bellow, and the great white bears prowl over the vast ice fields hunting their prey—sea's, white foxes, and walrus—and themselves hunted by the great hunter, man.

Captain John Scott had made three voyages, or rather cruises, and each time had returned with a good cargo of seal oil, whale oil, walrus oil, bear fat, and skins.

He would never have made a fourth voyage but from the fact that an Australian bank, in which he had invested the greater part of his savings, failed.

The consequence of that failure was, that, at the age of fifty, this was his position. He owned a small house and piece of ground on the lovely banks of the Paramatta river; he owned, moreover, the brig *Kangaroo*, a vessel of about 250 tons burden. And he had purchased an annuity for his wife of ninety pounds a year, and this was sufficient to support her and his two daughters, Ruth and Caroline, and keep the wolf from the door so long as the mother lived. The house he built himself, having purchased the ground, so that there was no rent to pay; and as beyond the annuity a sum of about a thousand pounds had been

saved from the wreck of the old sea captain's respectable fortune, amassed by a life of toil, of ten thousand pounds, when he sailed away to retrieve his loss his family was left in well-to-do circumstances.

Two hundred pounds he laid out in equipping and provisioning the brig for her somewhat perilous cruise; and with the remaining eight hundred he insured his life in favour of his two daughters, Ruth and Caroline, for £4,000 each, and to make all safe paid two years' premium in advance, although he did not anticipate being absent more than six months. The position of the mother and daughters was, then, at the date when the *Kangaroo* sailed, by no means a bad one.

Mrs. Scott had ninety pounds a year coming in, no rent to pay, a small but productive little farm—or rather large garden—was supplied with ready money, while the worthy captain was away at sea, doubtless laying in a good stock of seal skins and oil, to be disposed of at a high price when he should return with his brig loaded.

Hitherto he had been fortunate, and last voyage had cleared over three thousand pounds, after an absence of nine months.

It was well known among seafaring men that Captain Scott had discovered cruising grounds undoubtedly prolific in seals and walrus, and that he counted on filling the brig to the hatches with the valuable spoil of the ice mountains in about four months.

The skins of seals and the ivory of the tusks of sea-lions commanded a high price, and there was many a great temptation to a bold adventurous man such as John Scott, to depart from the beaten track of merchant vessels, to sail away to the far south in search of wealth. On his last voyage he had penetrated the Antarctic circle, far beyond Emerald Island, lat. 58 S., had come across an unknown group in lat. 67 S., and still daringly making way southward amidst ice-bergs, ice-fields, floes and snow-covered, barren islets, had, he declared, got sight of what he believed to be a vast continent, stretching to the South Pole.

But his further progress was barred by a solid plain of ice, and as the summer was rapidly closing in, he with difficulty

escaped being frozen in, and took the vessel back to the open sea, safely escaping perils almost innumerable.

So successful was this last voyage that he had determined to tempt fortune no more, but spend the remainder of his life ashore with his family, appointing a captain for his brig, and sending her to carry freight in less dangerous latitudes. But the loss of his fortune altered all this, and chafing and smarting under this rude shattering of his hopes for a peaceful evening of his life, Captain John Scott set sail, declaring that in two voyages he would retrieve all his loss.

He was a bold daring determined man, and more than one among his acquaintances prognosticated that in his impatience and anger he would outstep the bounds of prudence, in a mad effort to retrieve his fortune at one swift blow.

He had been heard to say by more than one seafaring man, that the farther south a vessel was taken, the greater the abundance of seals, bears, and walruses, and that a captain who would risk being frozen in for the winter, might, if fortune favoured, not only make his fortune by one cargo, but render his name immortal by discovering the great southern continent, the top of the lofty mountains of which he had himself seen.

So Captain John Scott sailed away on the 1st of October, 1860 (the beginning of summer in those latitudes), and on the 28th of September, 1864 he had not been heard of. Besides the two daughters, Ruth and Caroline, the captain and owner of the *Kangaroo* had brought up his brother's orphan son—at the date when John Scott sailed away on his long cruise, a fine fellow of nineteen, away at sea, third mate of an Indiaman. Tom Scott was fond of the profession he had chosen, was a good seaman, and looked forward with great eagerness to the time when he would come into a legacy of three thousand pounds left him by his father.

His intention was to purchase a small vessel, and, like his uncle, be captain of his own craft.

Both girls, Ruth and Caroline, were exceedingly handsome—tall, fair, with elegant figures and features almost faultless, magnificent specimens of Australian beauties.

That Tom Scott should fall in love with one of his handsome cousins is not a matter of wonder, considering how much they were thrown together, and what opportunities they enjoyed.

The high-spirited enthusiastic Caroline was the one on whom the young man fixed his attentions; and though the young lady was sought by more than one rich man, it was plain that her heart leaned to the young sailor.

Her mother, Mrs. Scott, naturally anxious for her daughter's welfare in a worldly point of view, saw Caroline refuse several very wealthy men—merchants and shipowners—with regret, which was increased when the absence of Captain Scott became so prolonged as to excite at first alarm, then dismay, lastly despair!

The annuity of ninety pounds a year would die with her, and after an absence of four years there could scarce be any hope of the safe return of the adventurer with a valuable cargo to retrieve the failing fortunes of the Scott family.

And, worst blow of all, Mrs. Scott had to look in the face the sad prospect of her daughters being left almost unprovided for.

There was the house and bit of ground it was true; but after the mother's death they would have no income whatever.

And her heart recoiled at the thought of her two lovely girls being left to fight the battle of life alone and in poverty.

True there was Tom, who would gladly marry Caroline doubtless; but what was three thousand pounds? The interest of that sum might indeed barely support two people, using great economy, but three could not live on it in even tolerable comfort.

And what about the insurance on Captain Scott's life?

This was the hardest blow of all. He had told his wife before sailing away on this last long voyage, from which after an absence of nearly four years, he had not returned, that he had insured his life in favour of each of his daughters for £4,000. But unfortunately, in the hurry and excitement of departure, Captain Scott forgot to give the policy of insurance to his wife, nor did he inform her where to find it.

Nor did Mrs. Scott know anything on the subject beyond the bare fact that he had insured his life, and for £8,000.

That was all he told, and she was even ignorant of the name of the office in which the insurance was effected.

The time came when he should return from his cruise. Weeks, months, years, two years passed, and yet there was no news of the *Kangaroo*.

At the end of two years Mrs. Scott, with a sad heart, gave up all hope for ever again beholding the bold sea captain, as did her daughter Ruth, and mostly all friends who spoke about it.

Caroline alone—enthusiastic sanguine Caroline—believed that her father would some day return in safety.

The third year passed, and then there was seen looming in the future the grim phantom—poverty.

That Captain John Scott had perished there could be little doubt.

Mrs. Scott's health was failing fast, and with her life ceased the ninety pounds a year, on which, and the little ready money (now nearly exhausted) left by Captain Scott, his wife and daughters lived. Under these circumstances, it is not strange that the widow should look anxiously for the future of her two daughters.

Caroline was sought in marriage by one of the wealthiest merchants in Sydney, yet hung back; and, to her mother's great chagrin, would give the wealthy suitor no encouragement.

But as time passed on, and the hope of Captain Scott's return grew fainter and fainter, and the future before the two young girls gloomier and gloomier, an amount of pressure was brought to bear on Caroline which she found it difficult to resist.

A marriage with George Martin, principal of the celebrated and wealthy firm of Martin, Coombs, and Co., would solve all difficulties, and remove the Scotts from the dismal regions of poverty to the bright green fields of affluence.

In conversation with the mother, George Martin had made the most liberal offers in the way of settlements, and the worthy woman, anxious only for her daughter's welfare—after she should be no more—earnestly urged upon Caroline that it was both her interest and duty to accept the wealthy lover, and so place herself and family in a good position.

Caroline's heart clung to her cousin, the young sailor; but still his long absences at sea and the shortness of his stay when he did come to Sydney were against him, and at the expiration of the second year he discovered the true state of affairs.

Poverty stared the widow and daughters of Captain Scott in the face.

Wealth offered in the shape of George Martin, and one word from Caroline would entirely change the face of affairs.

Tom Scott had no fortune to offer a share of to the girl he loved—nothing but a sum of £3,000 which he would have when he was three and twenty.

They talked it over, these two young people. Caroline still clung to the idea that her father would return in safety yet; and her lover, infected with her enthusiasm, declared his belief that Captain Scott had got among the ice and his vessel was "frozen in."

"Frozen in!" said Caroline; "and is there then no hope of his being able to get the vessel clear of the ice and returning home?"

"Hope—yes; why not? I was talking to-day with old, Bob Garnet, who has sailed two voyages with your father as boatswain, and would have gone this had he not been laid up with rheumatic fever. He has an old chart in which the Captain pricked off the ship's course and marked down the latitude and longitude of the great continent, the mountains of which he is sure he saw. Said Tom Garnet putting his finger on the chart. That's where the captain is—lat. 75 S., long. 160 E. There or thereabouts he is—FROZEN INN."

"Frozen in!" cried Caroline, "ah! what a fate! Surely there is hope? I heard him say he had four years' provisions on board."

"Yes," said Tom Scott, "and down there they would get abundance of seal, foxes, bears, and walrus."

"Then they may be alive now. They are alive now!" cried Caroline, with clasped hands, her eyes sparkling, her cheek flushed with hope.

"There is but one thing," said Tom Scott; "from want of fuel they might perish by cold. But if, as Tom Garnet thinks, there is indeed a continent down there, they would

be able to get wood, and with big fires and fur clothing from the skins of slaughtered bears, protect themselves against even the terrific cold of those ice-bound regions."

"Tom," cried Caroline, laying her hand on his arm, "I do believe that it is as you say. Our father is alive, but frozen in."

"And I too believe so."

"He must be saved Tom."

"And I, dear Caroline, will do it."

"Ah! Tom, if you would, or even failing, if you could bring certain tidings of his fate! Ah! then, then I should be for ever grateful!"

"Grateful enough to share the fortunes of a poor man—one who has his way to make in the world by an arduous and perilous profession?"

"Ten times over!" cried Caroline impulsively.

"Then I will tell you my plan—what I have been thinking of for months."

"Go on Tom," she said eagerly.

"You know that in two months I shall have a sum of money—three thousands pounds."

"Yes."

"Captain Scott found sealing very profitable."

"Ah! Yes but so dangerous Tom. Think of those terrible icebergs and all the terrors of those frozen regions."

"Dangers must be encountered, difficulties overcome," the young man said firmly. "I have made up my mind, and this is what I shall do. I shall buy a small vessel with the money I shall have. I will provision her, equip her, and provide a good crew. Then I will sail away south with a double object, sealing, whaling, walrusing, and in search of your father. It is now April, 1864. On the 1st of October 1860 Captain John Scott sailed in his own ship, the *Kangaroo*. On the 1st of October, 1864, his nephew Captain Thomas Scott will sail away in search of him and seals in his own vessel; and who shall say but that at the end of summer—say next April—Captain Tom Scott may not return successful, having rescued the crew of the *Kangaroo*, for more than three years FROZEN IN?"

CHAPTER II.

THE "WALRUS" SAILS IN SEARCH OF THE LOST SHIP.—
CHRISTMAS AMONG THE ICEBERGS.

ON the 1st of October, 1864, the brig *Walrus* sailed out of Sydney harbour, Captain Thomas Scott commander and owner, with a crew of twelve A.Bs., mate and second mate carpenter, boatswain, cook, steward, and cooper, and a surgeon. This latter was an unusual thing on so small a vessel; but Mr. Wallack was a friend of the captain's, and volunteered to go on the sealing voyage and exploring expedition in search of the lost brig, *Kangaroo*, supposed to be frozen in down among the ice-fields.

There were many friends of the young captain who accompanied him in the brig outside the heads of the harbour, to return in the tug steamer which towed her out. Conspicuous among those were two young ladies—exceedingly handsome girls—tall and fair, as native Australians usually are.

The passage between the roads is passed, the hawser cast off, and the steamer comes alongside, in order that the pilot and those others who are not going on the voyage may return. The two girls, Ruth and Caroline Scott, are accompanied to the gangway by the young Captain and Frank Royston, the first mate.

And as the last adieus are spoken the last pressure of hands given, each of the two young ladies hand to the captain and mate respectively a little locket attached to a thin ribbon.

The lockets contain certain miniature portraits—that of Tom Scott, Caroline's; of Frank Royston, the mate, pretty Ruth's.

That the lovely damsels have great interest in the safe return of the two sailors might be inferred, even without, the quaint simple inscription on the back of each locket.

Only the words "Come back," was underneath the initials of the giver.

The steamer cast off, and returned to Sydney. There was waving of caps, and cheers from the brig, and waving of handkerchiefs, and mayhap tears on board the tug steamer, and then the sails were trimmed, and the brig *Walrus* sailed away for the icy regions of the Antarctic Circle.

Captain and mate stood together by the taffrail looking back at Sydney's lovely harbour. Frank Royston held in his hand the little locket given him by Ruth Scott.

"We're going pretty far down south I suppose Captain?"

"Yes Frank; as far as 75 S., I reckon."

"All among the icebergs, glaciers, and packs. It'll be summer time when we get there; but if old winter catches us it's a great chance if ever we come back."

"Ay, Frank, it's death or glory this voyage. It's more than likely that we may be nipped in the ice and frozen in."

* * * * *

Midsummer within the Antarctic Circle, where midsummer is at Christmas time.

But what a summer! Ice—and more icebergs, immense rocks and glaciers—polar bears, seals, walruses, foxes, ermines, and the thermometer at zero!—colder than it ever has been or ever will be in any part of Great Britain.

Working persistently southward; not neglecting the commercial part of the venture—keeping a good look-out for seals, sea-lions, and whales, the little brig *Walrus* worked her way south towards the unknown regions around the South Pole.

Snow, fog and hail! solid ice to the southward—ice to the east—ice to the west—icebergs innumerable, and floating fields of ice to the north.

Such is the position of the *Walrus* on this Christmas-day at 72 south latitude—longitude 160 west.

Between the ice-fields to the south streams and broad channels have been seen at intervals during the day, when the fog cleared off and the driving snow ceased for a time to fall.

Beyond those ice-fields, through those tortuous channels where huge masses, great floes and bergs were continually crashing together, the captain of the *Walrus* meant to take his vessel.

SIX MONTHS' NIGHT.

For beyond that great plain of ice now being smashed up by the warmer summer currents from the north, lay land, a *terra incognita*; and in the belief of Thomas Scott, captain of the *Walrus*, the brave old seaman, Captain John Scott, was there frozen in with his brig *Kangaroo*.

And thither the adventurous young sailor meant to make his way; either in the brig or, failing to penetrate the icy barrier, by boat and sledge across the frozen plains.

It was midsummer, and he and his officers were sanguine enough to think it possible to force a passage through the ice, reach the neighbourhood of the spot where Captain Scott had marked on his chart land, explore thoroughly, get a stock of fuel, seal and walrus in abundance, and retrace their path before winter should have seized all nature in her embrace.

There was a good chance that at any rate the brig *Kangaroo* and some record of her crew might be found, even though all had perished.

For the young commander of the *Walrus*, the more he pondered on the subject, felt convinced that the old captain would make straight for that spot marked down on the charts.

And if he had been frozen in there, the intense cold would preserve anything from decay, and leave abundant evidence of the fate of him and his crew.

And so the little *Walrus* persistently bore along to the south, filling up all the while with seal-skins, whale oil, and walrus blubber and tusks.

The great authority on all Antarctic matters was Bob Garnet, the boatswain, who had been with Parry in the North Polar regions, and had made seven voyages down south among the icebergs.

This Christmas evening the fog and snow and surrounding icebergs made it necessary to heave the vessel to for the night.

There was little wind, and no immediate danger, so that all that was necessary was a good look-out.

The wind was from the north, and the brig was slowly drifting to leeward through the fresh ice which was constantly forming.

Under close-reefed maintop-sails and fore-topmast stay sail, she was hove to on the port tack, heading to the east.

At sunset there was little wind, and but for the fog the vessel might have been kept under sail, as besides the long twilight of an Antarctic summer, there was a good moon.

Hitherto the cruise of the *Walrus* had been singularly prosperous.

The skins of three hundred and fifty seals had been taken, and dried and packed in bales. Two right whales had been harpooned, brought alongside, cut up, and the blubber "tried out."

Forty walruses had also fallen victims to the harpoons and fire-arms of the crew, and no casualty whatever had hitherto occurred.

Moreover, the brig had been safely brought within a few degrees of the spot marked on Captain Scott's chart. The summer was but half over, and there seemed every prospect that a much higher latitude might be reached, and a safe return accomplished through the channels in the ice-fields.

And in despite of cold, fog, snow, and ice there was nothing of despondency or gloom on board the *Walrus* this Christmas-day.

The crew had signed articles on sharing terms, five pounds a month certain, and already each able seaman's portion would amount to at least seventy pounds.

Hitherto there had been no trouble or danger with ice-floes—it was but that very day that they had sighted the vast field of frozen sea to the south, and all were sanguine as to the possibility of forcing a passage through by some of the numerous channels, and reaching the wished for land—the Promised Land indeed, beyond the great ice-field.

The enthusiastic hopes of the captain, and the obstinate persistence of old Bob Garnet, as to the existence of land; the high mountains which he had himself once seen, where seals are as plentiful as black berries in English woods, where there was abundance of wood and shelter in good harbours from the storm blasts, had infected all on board.

In defiance of gloomy surroundings, all on board the *Walrus* where in good health and spirits, and well disposed to take advantage of their captain's invitation to an evening in the cabin, with grog *ad libitum*.

One man was left at the wheel and one on the look-out, and these were relieved every half-hour. And the rest, around the cabin table—the stove was red-hot at either end and a big kettle of hot grog in the middle—spent their Christmas night.

Story telling is an old Christmas game, and sailors above all others are noted for yarn-spinning. It is no wonder then that after supper, and when the grog began to circulate, all those who could and who had aught to tell should be called on for a story, a yarn of some sort.

"Now, lads," said the captain, "all you who can spin a yarn hold up your hands. Mr Wood, our second mate, can write short-hand, and we'll have all the stories taken down, and when we get back to merry Sydney they shall be printed. We'll call them 'Frozen in or Christmas among the Icebergs.'"

This proposal was greeted with approbation, and forthwith the yarn-spinning began.

The names of those who volunteered were written on pieces of paper, mixed up together in a cap, and the captain drawing one called out the name written thereon.

Sam Johnson, an A.B., answered thereto, and in rough but forcible language told his story, which the second mate short-handed.

The Spectre Helmsman.

IN the summer of 1839 the ship *Fulcan*, under the command of Captain Isaac Johnson, was on her homeward-bound passage from the Indies, with half a cargo of tea; and she stopped at Cape Negro, on the coast of Benzuela, after a lot of ivory, to make up her load. Having gone on shore at the Cape, the captain learned from the native contractor that he would have to go some fifteen miles up the Cannibal's River, as the elephant hunters had all the boats farther up in the country, so that in consequence they had not been able to bring the ivory down.

Captain Johnson was somewhat disappointed at this cause of delay, but without waiting to find useless fault, he deter-

THE SPECTRE HELMSMAN.

mined to man his own boats, and proceed at once up the river. It required four trips to bring all the ivory down, but as they had opportunity to take advantage of the slight tides, the task was accomplished in four days. On the last trip the captain went himself, leaving the first mate in charge of the ship; and on arriving at the small village where the ivory was stored, he was not a little surprised to find that nearly all the miserable huts were deserted. Several times Captain Johnson inquired of this, but the natives were either unable or unwilling to give any plain answer, and it was not until the last lot of tusks had been conveyed to the boats, and the natives had been remunerated for their labour, that the least clue could be obtained of this strange desertion; and then, for the first time, the captain received the startling intelligence that *the cholera was sweeping down the river*.

As soon as this fact became known to the seamen, they wildly huddled into their boats, as though the fearful death-angel was at their heels, and silently, yet with powerful strokes, they pulled down the fatal stream. At length they reached their ship, and though they breathed somewhat more freely as they trod their own deck, yet each countenance bore the stamp of deep fear. The ivory was soon got on board, and with all haste the old *Vulcan* was got under weigh. It was nearly night when the ship got off, and with a good breeze from the northward and the eastward, she stood well on her course. On the next morning, shortly after breakfast, and while the crew had begun to think that they had no occasion for further fear, a young man named Walter Addison was taken suddenly sick.

^s Young Addison was the favourite both of the officers and the crew, and as it was reported that he was thus ill, a general consternation seized upon all hands. The young man felt at first a giddiness and a sickly chill, and in the course of two hours he sank into an alarming debility, the countenance assuming an alarming paleness, and the skin bearing all the appearance of a corpse. Poor Addison suffered till noon, and then the startling announcement went through the ship that he was dead!

This was the *first*, but who should be the *next*? A panic had seized upon the men. The cholera was with them, and none

dared remove the form of their dead shipmate from its berth. Night approached, and with it came an almost dead calm; but the corpse still remained in the fore-castle, nor did the men dare go thither. The captain urged that the longer presence of the body would breed more dangerous contagion, but the only answer he received was a mournful shake of the heads about him. At length, finding that all arguments were useless, he turned to his mate and asked him if he would assist himself in throwing the dead body of the man overboard. The mate at first hesitated, but in a moment he signified his assent, and together himself and the captain went down into the fore-castle. They dared not remain long enough with the corpse to sew it up, nor even to attach to it a sinking weight, but throwing over it a blanket they managed to get it upon deck and lay it across the bulwarks of the starboard bow. A moment Captain Johnson hesitated, he opened his lips, breathed a prayer for the soul of the departed, and then, while a shudder ran over his frame, he let the cold form of young Walter Addison slide into the blue water! Instinctively he cast his eyes over the side as the deed was done, and by the pale phosphorescent light he could just see the corpse sink, then rise and sink again; and then, with a heavy step and a still heavier heart, he walked aft.

The first watch had been set, but the other watch dared not go below, and, huddling themselves beneath the long-boat, they sought the repose which they feared to seek where their companion had died; but each seemed to fear his neighbour, for none knew where the contagion might be. At eleven o'clock the slight breathings of the air, which seemed for the last few hours to have had no settled point, began to gather more force from the northward and westward, and ere long a good fresh breeze filled the ship's canvas and started her through the water.

The wind continued to increase, and before midnight all hands were called to take in the top-gallant sails. At twelve o'clock the mid-watch was set, and all hands were for a few moments brought in contact with each other. No further symptoms of the dreadful pestilence had appeared, and they began to take hope.

It was half-past twelve o'clock. An old seaman, named

Bill Tripper, had the helm, while the remainder of the watch were either in the gangway or else forward. The wind continued fresh, but yet steady, and the old ship was close hauled upon it, laying some two points off from her true course. The ship's bell was suspended over the binnacle, and old Tripper reached over and struck the first half hour after midnight. He had just resumed his position, and was gazing intently at the compass, when he felt a hand laid on his shoulder, and upon turning round, he beheld, by the struggling beams of the binnacle lamp, the pale deathly features of Walter Addison.

For an instant the old sailor remained rooted to the spot, and then, uttering a sharp cry of fear, he let go the wheel and started forward. In a moment the ship began to fall off, and as she brought the flat surface of the broad canvas to the wind, she heeled over alarmingly; but soon the pale spectre that had frightened the helmsman from his post caught the wheel, and laid the helm hard down, and ere long the ship was once more to the wind.

Tripper's cry had startled all hands from their listlessness, for they thought the cholera fiend had assailed him; but from his broken ejaculations they soon learned what was the matter and in a body they crowded aft, and by the dim light from the binnacle they saw the spectre helmsman. Every knee trembled, and every tongue clove to the roof of its mouth.

None dared approach him, nor did any move back. At this juncture the captain came on deck; his eye caught the corpse-like form that still held the wheel, and he, too, was riveted to the spot where he stood.

"Shipmates, relieve me from here or I shall faint—I am cold and weak!" at length came from the lips of the seeming spectre, in faint agonized tones.

Captain Johnson hesitated an instant, and then rushed forward, and laid his hand upon the trembling form before him. It was cold and wet, but he knew it was a living man. One after another of the men gathered about, and ere long all knew that young Walter Addison still lived. The captain had him conveyed to the cabin, where everything that could be thought of was administered for his comfort, and it was not long ere he sufficiently recovered to give an account of his strange

escape from the cold deep grave to which he had been consigned.

It seemed that young Addison had fallen into that death-like lethargy which not unfrequently results from sudden cholera, and which, as all who are acquainted with the disease must be aware, so nearly resembles death that even the best physicians have been deceived by it. The sudden submersion in the cold water had revived his dormant senses, and as the ship had but a slight motion at the time, he came to a partial realization of his situation ere she had passed him, and by considerable exertion he managed to get hold of the rudder chains. He tried to call for assistance, but his tongue was so swollen that he found it impossible, and after remaining upon the chains long enough to gain more strength, he worked his way up till he got hold of the lanyards of the cabin dead-lights, from whence he reached the lashing of the stern-boat, but here weakness again overpowered him, and after working his way into the boat he remained some time insensible, but at length he revived and came on board. He had tried to speak, but he could not; when the helmsman fled from the wheel he had sense enough to see the ship's danger, and from the impulse of a sort of instinct, he seized the wheel and brought her to the wind.

The next name called was George Sinnet, a Yankee, and his story was about

A Dog and a Shark.

I was passenger on board a vessel once from New York to Rio de Janeiro, and, having a favourite dog, I paid his fare and took him with me.

I called him Rolla, and he was the most knowing and sagacious animal I ever came across or heard of.

He had one remarkable peculiarity, and a phrenologist would probably have said that he had the organ of adhesiveness very largely developed.

But however that might be, one thing was certain—whatever living thing Rolla fixed his teeth into, whether it was a pig, another dog, or an ox, there he hung, like grim death, till he was choked off or wrenched away.

When I went on board, Rolla went with me, and as soon as he saw the captain he took a liking to him at once: and before the vessel sailed they had formed a lasting and most intimate friendship.

As soon as we got to sea, Rolla stood his watches as regular as any man in the ship. She was a small vessel of only about two hundred tons, and carried no second mate, the captain standing his own watch, and, of course, Rolla was in the starboard watch; and by the time that we had been a week at sea he was known fore and aft as the second mate.

Rolla was very officer-like in his deportment, always keeping aft at his own end of the ship, and never allowing himself to have any kind of a lark with the sailors forward.

Every day, towards noon, he would take his station near the companion-way; and when the captain came up to his quadrant to take the sun, he would leap on to one of the water casks, where he would sit and look very knowingly up at the sun until the captain sang out eight bells, when he would give a sharp quick yelp, and then he would run to the binnacle and have a look at the compass, after which he was ready for dinner.

The Captain had been several years a whaling, and he could swim like a fish, and liked the water quite as well as the dog; and as soon as we got into a latitude where the water was comfortably warm, he would often, when it was quite calm, jump overboard, and away would go the dog after him. After they had sported long enough the Captain would climb aboard, and pass down the bight of a rope for the dog, who would put his fore paws through it and the captain would haul him on deck.

After a while the dog got to like the sport so well that he would jump overboard by himself, and sometimes we would be obliged to haul the mainyard aback and heave the ship to two or three times in the course of a day, in order to pick up the dog.

Thus it went on until we were somewhere near the latitude of 30 degrees south, when one afternoon, near sundown, the captain shot a huge albatross which had lit in the water close astern of us. The water at the time

was as smooth as a pond, and there was so little wind that the vessel was barely moving through the water, going just enough to answer her helm. What little air there was, about south, and the barque was braced up sharp on the starboard tack, heading about W.S.W. Our boat was hoisted in on deck, and it would take fully half an hour to get it over the side; but the captain was determined to have his bird, and so he jumped overboard after it. And the dog was determined to have some fun, and so he jumped overboard after the captain, and both struck after the game.

I stood on the taffrail watching them, and when they had got, perhaps, four yards from the vessel, I observed the fin of a huge shovel-nosed shark projecting several inches above the water, in a direct line between them and the albatross. In an instant I shouted—

“Come back here, for God’s sake! There’s a shark just beyond you! Swim, swim for your life!”

The captain heard my warning and turned towards the ship, and his face was as pale as death. I don’t know whether the dog understood that there was danger near, but he appeared quite as anxious as the captain to regain the ship, and they were swimming abreast of each other and about a fathom apart; when—Oh, horror! another monstrous shark sailed slowly out from under the vessel’s lee quarter, and lay directly between them and the ship, as if waiting for them.

Never shall I forget that look of unutterable agony which was depicted on the young captain’s face when he discovered this new danger. He threw himself nearly his whole length clear from the water, and screamed in a voice so wild, so despairing, that for months afterwards it haunted me in my dreams like a nightmare—

“O my God! I’m lost!” A thought struck me, and I yelled to the dog—“Seize him, Rolla, take hold of him!”

The dog uttered a sharp cry, half whine, half bark, and made a lunge at the monster. The huge fish made a prodigious leap clear from the water, and I saw that Rolla had fastened to him. On the instant I shouted out to the captain to strike out for the ship, and in half a minute more we hauled him in on deck in safety.

We now turned our attention to the dog and his enemy

who were by this time close up under the stern. The frightened fish was lashing the water into a perfect smother of foam in his vain efforts to escape from his determined foe.

I made a running bow-line in the end of a coil of ratline stuff, and at the third heave was lucky enough to noose the shark, and we hauled him in on deck, with the dog hanging to his tail.

Poor Rolla was half drowned and sadly bruised; but he lived, and both he and the captain were thoroughly cured of their jumping overboard propensities.

"I reckon my story is the best of the lot," said Yankce Sullivan, when his name was drawn; "because it's *true*. It's about a bear and a sea-horse, and I saw it."

Artful Bruin.

I was with Captain Parry on his last voyage, when he got nearer to the North Pole than ever man has before or since. We had been frozen in for weeks, and the ship had been thoroughly dismantled, as far as yards and rigging were concerned.

The topmasts were struck and sent down on deck—every preparation made for a winter in the ice. Latitude 82 deg. 40 min. N., the highest northern latitude ever accomplished by man.

We had a year's provisions on board, and our captain—glorious John Parry—was sanguine of ultimate success; and on Christmas-day, with the thermometer 23 below zero, frozen in hopelessly for at least three months, he told us that before midsummer he would hoist the British flag on the North Pole.

But of all this I will say little. We did not get there, but returned to England after a two years' voyage, during which we suffered hardship and misery enough to last a man's lifetime, even if he was Methuselah.

What I've got to talk about now is bears—white bears—Polar bears they call them.

And this story of mine is about a Polar bear and a walrus—which we sailors call sea-cows.

Bears is dead on seals, and when they can't get seals they will tackle sea-cows, which, as all of us know, is a big and dangerous animal, with a deal of fight in him.

And besides being a fighting animal, this walrus is a cautious animal, and it ain't every bear as can catch one when wanted.

At this particular time (Christmas), there was a scarcity of animals about our ship; we had shot all the foxes—trapped all the ermine and white wolves—killed or frightened away all the seals—harpooned all the sea-cows, and hunted all the bears clean away except one.

And he was a bear—that fellow was! I'd back he weighed more than the biggest prize ox at the cattle show.

I often watched him, and tried to get near enough for a shot, but he was too clever for me, and calculated the range of a ship musket near enough to keep out of harm.

Near the place where we had winter-quartered the ship, we had cut a big hole in the ice which we kept open by smashing up the fresh ice two or three times a day as fast as it froze; in fact, this was to get water for the boiler of the engine (we condensed our own water), as otherwise we should have had to melt ice or snow.

For a long time seals and sea-lions used to come up out of this hole, get on the ice, and there lay till disturbed.

We shot several, but every one, directly he was wounded, would struggle to the edge of the hole, tumble in, and sink; so that we never succeeded in reviving the carcass of even one.

Mr. Bruin, too, kept a sharp look out, and many-a-time on the moonlight Arctic heights have I seen the great white unwildly carcass of the Polar bear prowling about in the vicinity of our ice-hole.

We were forbidden to fire at night, or else I could have got a shot many times, both at Bruin and a big walrus who used to come and sleep on the ice. At last he used to pretend to sleep, I think, for whenever the bear tried to approach, the sea-lion would waddle clumsily to the hole, and in the most awkward manner tumble in.

Both bear and walrus after a time became quite familiar objects, and they both got nick-names.

"Artful Bruin," and "the Old Cow," were the names by

which we knew them. For a long time the walrus kept close to the ice-hole on the side towards the ship, but after a bit he began to understand that the whistle and spatter of the bullets occasionally sent after him from the ship were meant to do him harm.

At first he had come on the side of the hole nearest the ship, for protection from the bear.

It seemed after a bit as though he preferred taking his chance with the bear to standing fire from the ship.

At last he selected a spot underneath a rock, about half-a-mile from the shore, a full twenty or thirty yards from the ice-hole.

It was useless to fire at him at this distance, only a waste of powder and shot, as even at short range a bullet will not always pierce the hide of a walrus.

So we let him alone, and watched with much amusement the battle between him and the big bear.

Bruin meant to kill him and eat him, and the walrus as strongly objected, and did his best to prevent such a consummation.

He always kept within easy distance of this ice-hole, and though he lay under a big rugged rock, it gave little advantage to the bear.

For all round the said rock was broken ice, which when trodden upon made a sound like broken glass, and so the walrus always had sufficient warning to get clear. At last, however, Mr. Bear fixed him, as the Yankees say.

I saw the deed done, and therefore can guarantee that what I now state is absolutely true; it was dinner time (twelve o'clock), and I alone on watch on deck.

I saw our friend the walrus come up from the ice-hole, look round, and then betake himself to a spot under the rock sheltered from the snow-drift and biting wind.

I saw the big bear, too, about half a mile off, prowling about on the ice as usual with him.

Bruin saw the walrus, and I believe the walrus saw Bruin, but treated him with contempt, relying on the proximity of the ice-hole.

Bruin meant to kill and eat that walrus, and I felt certain that it was that which kept him prowling about in this

neighbourhood so long, when he might have done much better in the way of provender—seals, walrusses, and fish—farther south.

But he'd set his mind on that sea-cow, and meant to kill him and eat him.

And Mr. Walrus objected to be killed and eaten and took proper precautions to obviate it.

I, standing alone on the forecastle of the ship, saw what I'm now going to relate.

I saw that big white bear walk towards the ice-hole, in what he meant to appear an easy unconcerned accidental way. But the sea-cow was aware of the approach of his enemy, and quietly sidled or waddled closer to the ice-hole. Thereupon the bear stopped, sat down upon his haunches, and licked his paws.

The walrus, seeing this, waddled back under shelter of the rock. Presently Bruin sauntered lazily away, and I thought he had gone seal-hunting somewhere else. I expect that it was walrus opinion also; for he lay, seeming quite happy and easy in his mind, at the foot of the big rock, depending on his acute hearing for warning of the approach of an enemy.

I was just going to the fore hatch to call the watch, and get relieved for my own dinner, when, happening to cast my eyes over the ice sea, I saw something which made me stop and see it out. On the top of the rock the huge outline of the bear was plainly visible.

Artful Bruin had climbed up from the rear, and now looked down complacently on the walrus sleeping innocently beneath.

I looked on at first with amusement; afterwards, as I watched the proceedings of Bruin, with curiosity.

He walked all round the rock, sniffing and smelling, as is the habit of these beasts.

Then he came to a full stop, right over the spot where lay the walrus.

The top of the rock was covered with soft snow, so that the big bear could move about noiselessly.

There were many loose blocks or boulders on the top of this rock, and I saw the bear (as I thought) rubbing his head against one.

But presently I observed that this lump of rock moved, and that, in sober fact, the bear was rolling it along ! ”

What happened next was a “licker.”

I saw that old bear deliberately roll the boulder to the edge of the rock.

Then he looked over the brink at the walrus, lying beneath.

Next he moved the big stone by rolling it, butting with his head, and pushing with his paws, till it was exactly over the spot where the walrus lay ; the rest was done in a moment.

Artful Bruin deliberately pushed the big stone over, and then sitting up on his haunches, gave vent to a roar, which I heard from the ship, and took to be a bear-laugh.

Anyhow he got his dinner, for the rock came plump on the walrus and killed him.

Artful Bruin then scrambled down at the back of the rock, and in a few minutes I saw him quietly shambling round to the walrus—his Christmas dinner.

Which walrus he immediately dragged off, and I expect he ate it.

This is a fact.

Mr. Frank Royston, chief mate of the *Walrus*, whose name came next on the list for a story, thought it incumbent on him to make some apology after the startling tale of Yankee Sullivan about the bear.

It was concerning an adventure of his own, and he called it—

Abel Smith's Prisoner :

AN ADVENTURE BEFORE CAPUA,

HOW ABEL SMITH AND SIX MORE OF US FOUGHT AT THE VOLTURNO, AND GOT TWO TONS OF GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.

CHAPTER I.

HOW WE WENT FROM NAPLES TO THE VOLTURNO AND WHAT WE DID THERE.

I was second mate of the English merchant steamer *Princess*, running between Palermo, Naples, and Genoa, in those wild

times when Garibaldi, with a thousand volunteers, landed in Sicily, defeated the Neapolitan troops sent to meet him, crossed to the main land (despite all the efforts of the royal navy of Naples to prevent him), made a triumphant march through Calabria, entered the capital and then, following the King's army to Capua, fought a pitched battle outside its walls, and conquered—though outnumbered two to one, and almost destitute of either artillery or cavalry.

I gave up my birth on board the *Princess*, as I did not like the captain. I was burning to go up to "the front," where the little Garibaldian army was quietly waiting before Capua for the King's troops to come out and fight.

I discharged myself, leaving three months wages behind me and started up to Caserta, where the General had his headquarters in the Royal Palace. I believe that the mate and skipper of the *Princess* did me the honour to call my discharging myself desertion.

That, however, did not trouble me. I was sick of the steamer, of the captain, and every one on board, and besides had got the Garibaldian fever, and was madly anxious for a share in the glory and excitement of the conquest of a kingdom under the great Italian patriot.

The head quarters and rendezvous of all the English in Naples was Mrs. Byrne's hotel, and when I came ashore from the steamer I at once made my way there, and proceeded to cast about for information as to how I should go to the front. I had little trouble about the matter. I found arriving and leaving a constant succession of volunteer officers and privates. Discipline amongst the volunteer forces of Garibaldi was very different from a regular force. Every one seemed to think that so long as he was ready to fight and die for the cause on the day of battle, that was all that could be expected; and to do these volunteers justice, they fought like devils.

On the very night I came ashore from the vessel, with only a clothes bag and a blanket, a revolver pistol, and a few pounds in money, I found that a party of six were to start after supper from Mother Byrne's for "the front," as the battle-ground before Capua was called.

There was about forty at supper that night at the hotel, nearly all French and English; the Italian volunteers, officers

and privates, frequenting the Café del Europa by preference.

After this social meal, of which all partook at a long table, I and the six others who were going up to the front started for the railway station.

There was no bother about tickets. We simply found that an engine and some trucks were to start at midnight for Caserta—distant from Capua about seven miles—and took our places.

There were no carriages; only cattle trucks, all of them lumbered up with provisions, munitions of war, blankets, great coats, and, ghastly to add, stretchers for the dead and wounded.

We all of us wore red shirts, and this, with the bare statement that we were going up to the front to join the army, was considered amply sufficient by the few railway officials. In fact, at that time, all money fares were abolished; men came and went just as they liked if no officer interfered to forbid.

And now a few words about my six companions.

They were all young and vigorous men but one—a quiet, middle-aged man of most pacific appearance: which, however, was belied by his character; for he carried a long small-bore rifle, with which he made deadly practice as a sharpshooter.

He was the most cold-blooded, methodical man I ever came across. He would wait for hours for a chance of a shot at an enemy's sentry or rifleman, and withal had a keen eye to business.

"Glory and loot—that's my principle," he used to say "I went deer-stalking once," he said, "and always made something out of skin, horns, and venison when I knocked a buck over. I call this man-stalking, and mean to make a profit if I can."

On arriving at the front, this strange character joined the brigade of the English officer Dunne, and was remarkable on account of his always volunteering for the most advanced and dangerous sentry posts.

His name—whether real or assumed I can't say—was Abel Smith, and that was all any one knew about him.

Next I come to a fine fellow whom we knew as Scott the Bugler. He had evidently been in the English army; for he knew the drill thoroughly, and also all the bugle calls, on which instrument he played magnificently. He was

stalwart, handsome fellow, strong as a horse, fearless as a lion, and when I found that, besides having been a soldier, he had also been to sea, a bond of unison was at once established between us.

Then there was an Irishman, lieutenant in the militia regiment, not called out. He too was like the majority of his countrymen, game for any devilment, only too glad for a chance of fun and fighting.

Next I came to Charlie Hall, son of a West Indian planter, with a tinge of Mullatto blood in his veins, a fact of which I felt tolerably certain. A more utterly reckless, careless, fearless fellow never breathed. Always in high spirits, ready with a laugh, and always ready with a blow. Nothing whatever seemed to have any effect in taming the wild nature of Charlie Hall.

Hardship and privation he cared not one jot for, danger he despised, and I believe was thoroughly without thought or care as to what might befall him.

A sailor, who, having also caught the Garibaldian fever, and taken the liberty of prolonged leave of absence without asking from her Britannic Majesty's ship *Renown*, 74, then at anchor in the bay of Naples, and a city clerk, member of the 20th Middlesex Volunteers, in addition to myself, made up our party of seven.

This latter, a Mr. Edward Trueman, in virtue of being a sergeant in the volunteer corps, was disposed to give himself airs, and set himself up as an authority on military matters.

For all practical purposes, however, he was both helpless and useless, as he could not even light a fire, or when it was lighted cook his meals. As he had come with us from Naples, and seemed desperately unwilling to part company with us, we allowed him to hang on, feed, and take up his quarters with us.

With the exception of this member of what Scott the Bugler used to call contemptuously the "tame army," a more reckless, careless set of devil-me-cares there was not to be found on the plains before Capua.

But we will get on with our story, and let the reader form his own opinion about the actors.

The train from Naples was delayed, and did not start until two o'clock on the morning of the 1st of October. The distance to Caserta was only about twenty miles, but so slow was the progress of the engine that it was nearly 4 A.M. before we arrived. And at that early hour our ears were greeted by the sharp rattle of musketry, and the dull booming sound of distant artillery.

The train stopped at Caserta, and we saw by the grey morning light that there was considerable commotion. On the large open space of ground between the railroad and the King's palace, we could see a number of men, not in military formation, but in groups, most of which were in constant motion.

Mounted officers rode to and fro, and we could hear bugle calls and words of command shouted in Italian. We noticed that numbers were starting off each moment along the Santa Maria road, from which direction the sound of musketry and cannonading came.

Many came and sought to get conveyed by the train, but there was no room, even the platform of the engine, the engine itself, and the tops of the carriages being crowded with wild-looking men mostly armed with a musket or rifle only, and whose only uniform consisted of the universal red shirt.

After a quarter of an hour's delay the train started for Santa Maria, distant about four miles.

Half-way there a sharp rattling fire was opened on the train at close quarters, and in an instant bullets were splintering the woodwork of the carriages, and whistling about our ears in a most unpleasant fashion.

The frightened driver of the engine quickly brought the train to a stand, and then there was a general rush to the ground.

There were in all about two hundred of us on the train, and all being armed, some officers, who happened to be present, formed the men behind the embankment, and we kept the Neapolitans in check, and finally caused them to retreat by means of a smart fire.

This gave an opportunity for the engine-driver to mount on his engine and start the train back to Caserta, while we, directed

by some Italian officers who were acquainted with the locality, started off across the fields for Santa Maria, and the scene of conflict where the roar of battle momentarily became louder and louder.

This was my first experience of actual warfare, the first time I had ever smelt powder burnt in anger.

We had by chance arrived at the scene of action just at the commencement of the battle of "the Volturmo." I can assure you that I felt no fear at all, only excitement and enthusiasm.

Those who have never heard the sharp rolling rattle of heavy musketry fire can form no idea of the excitement it occasions to those not accustomed to it.

The prevailing sentiment invariably is a desire to be in the thick of the fire, and it is well known by military officers that young inexperienced troops are with great difficulty kept back at the commencement of an action.

The old soldiers know the danger, and, aware of the terrible exhaustion and fatigue of a long day's fighting, are not so anxious to dash into the affray first thing.

Well, taking the advice of one of the Italian officers, we made the best of our way to the position of St. Angelo, where we sought out Colonel Dunne, an English officer in command of a mixed battalion of French, British, Italians, and Hungarians—in fact, a medley of European nations.

He gladly accepted our offered services, and told us to join the light company, as the majority of us knew little about drill or military tactics. We were immediately sent to the front and in half-an-hour after our arrival were in action against the enemy. It was a hard-fought and desperate battle, but we won.

By singular good fortune, not one of us seven was killed or even wounded, and at night we all camped out together under the shelter of the wall of a burnt barn, in front of which we made a big fire.

The next day was occupied in burying the dead, and reorganizing the regiments, appointing fresh officers in place of those killed, and so on; and in less than a week, there was to be found by a stranger little trace of a desperate battle having been fought on the ground.

Occasionally, in clumps of brushwood, in ditches, and in other

sheltered places, dead bodies of Garibaldians or Neapolitans would be found where they had been shot down, or crawled wounded to die.

The company to which I had volunteered was posted at a farm-house, far in advance of the main body of the army.

We, in fact, were an extreme outpost, and the chain of sentries we posted still further on could see the buildings of Capua through the trees, and often exchanged shots with the enemy's sentinels.

We had taken possession of an upstairs room at this little farm-house, which was only one story and four rooms ; and as we considered that seven was quite enough to occupy it, we reserved it to ourselves in a very simple manner.

That is to say, Scott the Bugler did, for he got a hatchet and deliberately destroyed the rickety old stairs.

He had previously removed a ladder just long enough to reach to the window, and this was our sole means of going up or down. It was always kept up in the room ; and as it was very seldom that more than two of us were on sentry duty at the same time, there were generally five in possession of our citadel, and when anyone of us came home, as we called it, off duty, the ladder was lowered down in response to our challenge—Guard room, ahoy there !

For we had dignified our roost with the name of guard-room, and most sedulously did we guard it against all intruders.

I can assure you, my friends, that we were jolly enough up there. Scott the Bugler and Charlie Hall were splendid foragers, and provided the substantial food, while I and Tom Hopton did the cooking.

There was a stove in one corner of the room, which we used for cooking purposes, when it was only a bit of a stew, or something of that kind. It answered until our foragers brought in something bigger, such as a turkey or young pig ; then we lit a big fire a little way from the house and roasted it.

On such occasions we always gave some to the captain and officers of our company, and thereby we purchased for ourselves considerable immunities and favours—in fact, we were allowed to do pretty nearly as we pleased, so that we took our turn of sentry duty, which was by no means onerous.

We had previously got possession of an old ramshackel light cart, and a horse having been foraged in some unexplained and mysterious, and probably irregular manner, we soon were of importance. In the first place we had money—at least all except Charlie Hall, and Trueman the volunteer, of whom we took little notice, leaving him to do odd jobs, such as fetching wood and water, as the price of being allowed to mess with us.

Then we had sole and undisputed possession of a horse and cart. The harness we made ourselves out of bits of blankets and leathern straps, and so forth. Revolvers, too, we all had, including Trueman (who by the way, did not know how to load his).

This horse and cart was a great treasure.

On one occasion, we were started off on a march to Teano, to meet the King of Italy and Cialdini with the Piedmontese army. It was a long and painful march—the roads bad, and most of the men unaccustomed to tramping twenty-five miles right off in heavy marching order.

But by an inspiration of genius we so contrived as to be allowed to fall out of the ranks and trudge along merrily in the rear—our rifles, packs, and all our belongings in the cart.

This is how we did it, and, like many other things of great importance, it was very simple.

We made friends with the Colonel's orderly, and offered to carry all his baggage, provender, cooking utensils, &c.

A rather amusing episode occurred on the return march from Teano. Some men had strayed in the woods, shooting pigs, or anything else they could see alive, with their rifles. The King of Italy with his staff happened to be passing, and some stray bullets whistled about, unpleasantly near his Majesty's head.

At this there was a great hubbub, and six men being subsequently found coming into the camp well provided with spoil, in the shape of geese, turkeys, fowls, &c—the result of their foraging expedition—they were forthwith arrested and sentenced to be shot then and there.

No doubt the sentence would have been carried out, for Colonel Peard was a stern and relentless old warrior, but, fortunately for the delinquents, Garibaldi heard of it and

countermanded the order, saying (they were all six English) that Englishman should not die by Italian bullets. And so they escaped, as one of them expressed it, by the "skin of their teeth."

The day after this, the Colonel, happening to be in the rear of the regiment while we were on the march back to St. Angelo, came across our noble selves with the said horse and cart trudging along as merrily as sand-boys to the great envy of our comrades in front, who had to carry their own baggage.

The Colonel looked hard, and then called to him his orderly, Sergeant Ryan.

"Who are those men, Ryan!"

"Some of your men, Colonel—at least they're attached to the regiment at present."

"Where did they get that horse and cart from!"

"Well, Colonel, I can't exactly say. I dare say, though, in rather an irregular manner. There's a deal of foraging going on in war time,"

"Ah! I see. D——d rascals—ought to be shot—have the cart turned over, and order them into the ranks."

The sergeant looked aghast, and the Colonel was turning away when he saluted.

"Beg pardon, Colonel——"

"Well, what is it!" asked the officer, angrily.

"They're carrying all your honour's baggage on the cart, half a pig for your supper, and all the cooking things, to say nothing of bread, flour, and so on."

The Colonel looked a little bit taken aback at this, then laughed and said, as he rode on—

"Well, well, let them come on in the rear. They ought to be shot all the same, though."

And so we were allowed to follow on at our pleasure as heretofore, much to our satisfaction, and I doubt not that of the Colonel also, for we always took care to be up in time with his baggage and provisions.

When we got back before Capua, to our great joy we were posted at the very same farm-house, and at once took up our old quarters unquestioned, almost as a matter of right.

And now I come to the adventure to which all this preamble leads up.

I have before said that Abel Smith, the middle-aged quiet man, with the small-bore rifle, was a singular character.

His habits were very peculiar. If there was anything going on between the outposts on either side, sharpshooting by sentries, or any chance of a shot, Abel would volunteer to take any one's turn at sentry duty, right in the extreme front, be the night or day ever so disagreeable.

I have watched him again and again standing motionless behind his tree, peering cautiously out every minute or so towards the enemy. If there was firing going on he would wait and watch till he had singled out one particular puff of smoke or rifle flash. He would not fire at once, as some other over eager ones would do ; but would wait and wait, till the man from whose rifle the puff of smoke had come exposed himself a little. Then Abel would take a long and steady aim, and presently the sharp crack of his rifle would be heard.

It was seldom possible to tell with any certainty what was the exact effect of the shot ; but one thing I noticed, and that was, that after Abel had marked a tree behind which there was an enemy for any time, the fire from that tree ceased. It might have been caused by the death of the man behind it from Abel's deadly bullets, or, again, it might be that the leaden pellets whistling about his ears so close—perhaps striking the tree—warned him to seek safety elsewhere.

It must be remembered that the distance between the sentries of either army was very seldom less than four or five hundred yards, in round numbers—say a quarter of a mile, and often much more ; so that it was extremely difficult to ascertain the effect of a particular shot.

Well, then, "old Abel," as we used to call him—though he was only middle-aged—was very strange in his habits. When off duty, he would be prowling about the line outposts from choice, and once I saw him, to my great astonishment far in, advance of our farthest man, walking leisurely along, rifle on shoulder, as if there were no such things as enemies with tolerably decent rifles within miles.

Two or three days after this I myself was on extreme outpost duty—one of the line of sentries nearest to the enemy.

For my own part I did not care about shooting at poor

devils of sentries on the other side, who, like myself, as I candidly own, would much rather be somewhere else.

There was nothing to be gained by it, and I considered that, if I fired, the flash or smoke of my rifle would attract a return fire, whether I hit or missed, and even if I hit I should only kill an unfortunate wretch whose face I had never seen, and who was very likely fighting sorely against his will, and, moreover, that his death or maiming would make no difference whatever to the issue of the campaign. For all these reasons, I did not indulge in what old Abel thought a luxury—"sentry potting," as we called it.

"Well, on this particular night I went on sentry duty at three hours after midnight, and should in the ordinary course be relieved at 5 A.M.

Selecting a good-sized fig-tree, with spreading branches, I wrapped myself up in my blanket, and lighting my pipe leaned up against the tree, and prepared to make the best of my two hours' vigil.

About a quarter past four a gray light told of approaching dawn. There was a slight moon, too, and but for the prevailing mist at that hour all about the plains of the Volturno, it would have been tolerably light.

As it was, however, I heard the measured tramp of approaching footsteps before I could see any one.

Presently, however, peering out at times cautiously from behind my tree, I saw figures—two at least, probably more, I thought—advancing from the direction of the enemy.

My heart beat faster as I seized my rifle, cocked it, examined the cap, and then did the same by the revolver I had in *y* belt. Then I challenged in Italian—"Che ve la?"

CHAPTER II.

HOW ABEL SMITH BROUGHT A PRISONER IN.

THE answer came promptly, without a moment's hesitation—"Amico—Volentari Inglesi."

This was very extraordinary. Friends and English volunteers approaching from the direction of Capua—coming straight from the enemy's outposts, as it seemed to me.

And, strange to say, though the answer was in Italian, and with good Italian accent, the voice somehow sounded familiar to me.

But, though in one sense a young soldier, I was too old a soldier to be satisfied with so vague an answer.

Thought I,—

"It's the advanced guard of the enemy, probably coming on in force. My orders are, in case of the countersign not being given to my satisfaction, to fire or charge with the bayonet at discretion, and then retire on my supports; and I know what I shall do, if it is the enemy—shoot, and slope to the said supports as fast as I can."

All this passed through my mind in a second or two.

"Halt, friend," I cried—in, I expect, very bad Italian—"and give the watchword."

"Melazzo," was the prompt reply.

"Palermo," I cried, gladly giving the countersign; "advance Melazzo."

And in half a minute, to my great surprise, I found myself face to face with Abel Smith, and some one else, in blue tunic, with white cross-belt and green shako.

One of the enemy.

At first the thought flashed across my mind that Abel Smith—who, of course, knew the word of the night—had deserted, and was leading the enemy on thus armed, in order to surprise us.

But I soon dismissed this idea. His words would have undeceived me, even if a certain instinctive feeling had not whispered to me that Abel was a true man, and no traitor.

"Royston, my boy, I've got a prisoner."

"The devil you have!—hurrah!" I cried, in my joy at finding that I had not got to fire or charge with the bayonet at my discretion, &c.

"Hush! don't make such a noise. It's something very extraordinary, very mysterious."

"The devil it is!" I cried. "Well, I expect the officer of the night on 'grand rounds' here presently, with my relief. Keep him here till he comes, and then hand him over to the guard."

"No, no, not for worlds. We must keep him ourselves."

"What for?" I asked utterly bewildered.

"We must, I tell you and not let a soul know that we've got him."

"Why not?" I asked, quite in a fog at all this mystery about Abel Smith's prisoner.

"Because if we keep this dark, and play our cards well our fortunes are made."

"Are they though?" I said somewhat incredulously.

"Yes, and no mistake. What do you say to *two tons of gold and silver plate*?"

"Two tons of gold and silver plate!"

"Yes, an eighth share would be a tidy fortune, would it not?"

"I should think so" said I; "for my part I should be well satisfied—never go to sea again, except as captain of my own vessel, I'd bet my life."

"Well then it's ours, if we're only cautious, prudent, and bold, and strike at the right time.

"But how is all this to be brought about?" I asked.

"Through him, my prisoner here"

"Who is he?"

"He says he's a deserter, I think he's a spy—a Neapolitan spy; and as I found him prowling about within our lines, I could have him shot, no doubt. But that's not my game."

Here he turned to the prisoner, who stood mute and abject, and to my great astonishment addressed him in good Italian, talking easily and fast.

I was aware that he knew some few phrases and words, as most of us did, but had not the least idea he could speak the language like this.

I could just gather the meaning of what he said, which was to the effect that the prisoner was a spy, and if he chose to take him to head quarters he would be shot there and then; which he would certainly do if the Neapolitan attempted to deceive him.

The prisoner was terribly frightened at this threat, and wept, and prayed, and called on all the saints to witness that what he had said was quite true, and that he would give full information as to the treasure.

"Well, now, Royston, we must keep this fellow to our-

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selves; let no one know but our own party that we've got him."

"How's it to be done?"

"Well, we must smuggle him off to our guard-room, and keep him there till everything's ready. We can do it as soon as you are relieved. All those not on duty will be asleep at this early hour, and in the morning mist we can get him up unseen if we're careful."

Somehow or other Abel Smith's manner impressed me a good deal, and I felt that there really must be something in it.

Just at this time I heard the steady tramp of men in our rear, then the challenge of a sentry, a brief halt, and again the sounds approached.

It was the officer coming round with the relief.

"What's to be done now?" I asked of Abel; "you say he must be got up unseen; there's the relief coming with one officer — at all events he must see the prisoner, and will order him to be sent to the rear, perhaps to head quarters under guard."

Abel Smith thought for a moment or two.

"Give me your handkerchief, quick," he said.

I did so, and he immediately proceeded to bind the prisoner's hands behind.

Then he bound a white handkerchief of his own over the ugly Neapolitan shako of the prisoner.

I could not for the life of me make out what he was doing this for, but asked no questions, as he seemed to know thoroughly what he was about.

"They will have heard us talking, in all probability," he said, in a hurried whisper, "as I was speaking rather loud. The officer may ask you who was with you, if I am not here when he comes, and his suspicions being roused, he may look keenly round about and see me and the prisoner. So I'll stay where I am; send this fellow some little distance, where I can see him, and my rifle bullet will reach him if necessary. Now, then, you fellow, listen to me," he said, speaking to the Neapolitan in Italian, rapidly, and in a low voice.

"Si, Signore," the man answered, humbly.

"Do you see that olive tree?" he asked, pointing to a large one about sixty or a hundred yards away.

"Si, Signore."

"Well, I am going to try you. You march to that tree and stand with your back against it, facing this way. I shall keep my rifle pointed at you, and if you venture to go past the tree, or to move from there when once you have taken up your position, I'll shoot you dead as mutton; and even were I to miss you, we should give chase, and you can't run fast with hands tied behind you. Now, then, go off quietly and quickly, and mind you obey my orders in every particular, or——"

Click went the lock of Abel's deadly smallbore as he rocked it.

The Neapolitan slunk away, and my companion kept his rifle ready to fire at a moment's notice. We watched him approach the tree, face about, and take up his stand as ordered.

"Now, you see why I tied my white handkerchief over his shako," said Smith, in a whisper; "splendid mark if he were to try a run for it!"

I did, indeed, see now, for through the thick morning mist the body of the Neapolitan could with difficulty be made out; but the white handkerchief offered a splendid mark for a rifleman.

Any one not knowing the facts might have looked at the white patch so motionless against the tree, and never have known there was a body beneath it. With us, of course, it was different, and I could just make out the dark form of the prisoner, knowing that it was there.

In half a minute the officer and relief came up, and, seeing Abel with me, made no remark, for the nocturnal prowling habits of my companion were no secret in our battalion.

I was soon off duty, and directly the relief party had gone away I started with Smith for the prisoner. We found him standing, pale, motionless, and frightened, with his back to the tree, as ordered.

Probably he had some sort of vague fear as to the intention of his captors. Perhaps he thought that he was stuck up against that tree for us two to practice at—as a target, in fact.

However, we soon undeceived him as to that, and ordering him to march on a pace or so in front, we headed for our guard-room, and Abel commenced to tell me how he caught his prisoner.

It was an extremely simple story. In the course of one of his night prowls he had suddenly perceived a figure creeping from tree to tree within our lines, and issuing from the direction of the enemy. Concealing himself in a favourable position, the man passed near enough for him to recognize the Bourbon king's uniform.

"A spy," thought Abel. "I'll follow him, and make him prisoner." He did so for some time, the other advancing with the utmost caution, looking about him in all directions.

Abel followed him to within half a mile of the two-gun battery, and, then, unfortunately, the breaking of a dry stick made noise enough to call his attention to the fact that he was seen and followed.

Abel raised his rifle and took aim as the fellow started and ran away; but for once the usually unerring small-bore missed fire.

Then Abel ran in pursuit, and being vigorous and long-winded, never lost sight of his man by the dim moonlight, and finally came up with him close to the Capuchin convent, and almost within the enemy's lines.

Abel at once accused him of being a spy, and told him his intention of taking him in to the colonel of his regiment, who would doubtless hand him over to the provost marshal who would order a file of soldiers and have him shot at early dawn.

The fellow's terror was extreme, his petitions for mercy and his liberty abject, indeed. When he found that his captor's heart was proof against his frantic prayers for mercy, he tried another tack, and appealed to his interests. "And," said Abel, as we came in sight of our watch fires, "he revealed to me a secret by which all our fortunes must be made—the secret of a great treasure, Royston, my boy!"

"What was the nature of this secret?" I asked, eagerly, "tell me."

"Not now—not now," he said; "another time. We must contrive now to get our prisoner up to our den without his real character being known or suspected."

ABEL SMITH'S PRISONER.

After some little talk about it, the prisoner was invested in my grey uniform overcoat and wide-a-wake hat, while I bound a handkerchief round my head and stood in my red shirt and trousers. Such a costume, on a cold raw morning, might certainly be thought peculiar; but, then, it was no one's business but my own, and, as my face was well known, I should not be stopped or questioned. The prisoner, attired in my long coat and hat, might well pass for one of our own men of another regiment; and being seen with me and Abel Smith, would also pass unchallenged. Having given the Neapolitan prisoner orders what to do, we sauntered leisurely towards our encampment, passed several groups preparing breakfast, and, having had the ladder let down from the window of our guard-room, ascended—the prisoner between us.

It was now broad daylight, and as Smith, who was the last to ascend, stepped into the room, Scott the Bugler exclaimed, looking at the stranger:

"Why, who the devil's this you've brought with you?—a visitor?"

"Ay; a welcome guest I'm thinking you'll say when you know all, friend bugler—a guest that will be the making of all our fortunes."

I motioned to the prisoner to take off my overcoat and hat, which he at once did.

"Murder and Irish!" cried Charlie Hall, starting up as his eye fell on the cross-belt and Neapolitan uniform; "by the piper that played before Moses, it's one of the enemy!"

"Indeed, you're right there, Charlie," said Abel, quietly.

"And how the devil does he come here, the throat-cutting vagabond!" cried the Irishman.

"I brought him a prisoner."

"And what the devil did you bring the fellow here for?"

"What for? Why, just to make the fortunes of all the lot of us—that's what I brought him here for."

"Oh, gammon! none of your blarney," said Charlie Hall.

"It's a fact, upon my soul! Now, see here, lads," Abel went on, perceiving that all were now awake and gazing with eager curiosity at the prisoner; "I made the fellow a prisoner within our lines, and, of course, if I chose, I could have given him up to an officer, and he'd been sent to the rear and shot

as a spy; but that would do us no good. Dead—he would be of no service; alive, he can and shall do us great service.”

“How?—how?” cried some.

“What sort of service?”

“Tell us what you mean, old Abel.”

“All in good time,” said the latter quietly—“all in good time. I’m cold now, and hungry too; I want some hot coffee and breakfast, as does Frank Royston here and this poor devil. I’ll tell you this much, however, that the prisoner knows where there’s a great treasure concealed which we can get at, and what’s more, he’s going to tell us.”

“Of course he is,” said Scott the Bugler, quietly, “or we’ll slit his wizen for him.”

We then set about warming ourselves and getting breakfast, taking care so to dispose the prisoner that no one should see him through the windows.

No more questions were asked at that time, all being contented to wait.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRISONER’S SECRET.

WE finished our breakfasts, the prisoner, being now an important character, having a share given to him. Then, lighting our pipes, we seated ourselves in a semicircle round the little stove, the Neapolitan and Abel in the centre, and and anxiously awaited the unfolding of the secret of this treasure.

“Now,” said Abel, “I’ll get it all from him, and tell you word for word what he says; first, however, all must take an oath not to reveal what I say to any others but ourselves, and to stand together until we get the treasure, and then to divide it equally.”

Then there was a muttered conversation, and more than one were of opinion that Edward Trueman was scarcely to be trusted, and might prove an incumbrance and a danger.

But unfortunately he was aware of the presence of the prisoner, and if we turned him away from our mess he could reveal the fact to an officer, when of course our captive would be taken away, and to save his life would undoubtedly tell

others what he had told us, so that we should lose all chance of the treasure.

Under those circumstances it was resolved that he might stop and share the adventure, and our prize when we got it.

But he was bound down by a terrible oath to secrecy, an oath concocted by Scott the Bugler, and which I strongly suspected had been administered some time or other to himself, as a member of some secret society, or participant in some terrible secret.

However, the said Bugler and Charlie Hall very quietly but firmly intimated to Trueman, that if he or any one gave them cause of suspicion, he should be instantly shot.

As Charlie Hall had a few days previously killed his man in a duel, and Scot was known as a desperate character, I thought that these intimations would probably have the desired effect.

All this having been satisfactorily settled, Abel Smith commenced talking to the prisoner in Italian, and translating what he said to us.

But I, for convenience sake, will relate it straight off, without the questioning and interrupting, which really took place.

"I belonged to the 4th regiment of Royal Carabineers," began the prisoner, "of which the most Noble Marquis Campirelli is Colonel. I was also the private servant and valet to the Marquis, so had little military duty to do except on the occasion of a military parade—or a battle—which latter, heaven be praised, did not take place often. The fact of my being constantly about the person of the Marquis caused me to know a great deal of his affairs, and also of the affairs of others of the Neapolitan nobility, friends of his. I tell you, honourable sirs, that affairs at the King's court at Capua, are in a bad way; many of the nobility and chief officers of state have already deserted him, and the rest are only waiting to make certain which way fortune is going finally to incline.

"Before the King and his generals marched out on the 1st of October, and fought what you term the battle of Volturmo—gallantly won by you, noble sirs—it was known in Capua that the Piedmontese General Cialdini and Victor

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Emmanuel were advancing to the north to attack the town in the rear, and prevent the retreat of the King and court.

"It was known that Cialdini had advanced into the Papal states, and had beaten Lamoriciere at Castelfidardo; it was the knowledge of this which caused the King and his generals to fight the battle of the 1st of October, in the hopes of defeating Garibaldi and re-entering Naples before the Piedmontese army could arrive.

"Great was the consternation which the news of the advance of Cialdini and his army caused.

"Greater still was the consternation in the town, even amongst the nobles of the court and others who had gone to Capua with the King, when he and the army returned at night, utterly defeated. And now, noble sirs, I come to the part of my story which concerns the treasure. Many of the nobles and great officers of state had brought with them to Capua their treasure, chests of gold and silver plate, in order that they might have these with them and protected by the royal army. They did not anticipate for a moment that Capua would be threatened from the north, in danger of being entirely besieged, or that the King's army would be utterly defeated by Garibaldi.

"Great was their terror and dismay when all these facts were accomplished. I, who was constantly near the Marquis Campirelli, heard their alarms and plans to put themselves and their treasures in safety. One night I overheard a long discussion between the Count and several other noblemen as to how this could be done. They all agreed that it was folly to let their valuables remain in Capua, in face of the danger of the city being taken by assault, and given up to plunder, when of course they would lose all their treasures. After much discussion, a plan was hit upon, and I overheard it. It was a notable scheme, and but for my overhearing it would now be locked in their own breasts, and probably they would all in due time get back their treasures. This was the plan:—

"About a mile from Capua, perhaps more, and between the town and Santa Maria, there stands a Capuchin convent, now deserted by the monks; for, standing between the army of Garibaldi and the guns of the fortress, the bullets and cannon

balls whistled over and around it, often striking the walls, so as to render it unsafe to stay."

"I know the place well," Abel Smith said, addressing us, "and once was nearly close up to it; but, being fired at by the enemy, was forced to go back. I've often felt anxious to explore it, and had made up my mind to, on the first opportunity."

"Well, noble sirs, it was resolved by my master and others that their treasures should be removed from Capua and deposited in the vaults of the Convent."

This announcement caused a visible sensation amongst the attentive audience.

"This having been decided on, it was soon done. The royal outposts were pushed farther forward, and one day—I dare say some of you gentlemen may remember—our troops advanced in some force, and pressed in far beyond the Convent. I think it was intended to hold the ground thus gained, but the royal troops were met by an English regiment just arrived."

"Yes, yes, the British Legion," cried several.

"And by these and some Bersaglieri were driven back into the open plain before Capua; not, however, before the design as to the hiding of the treasure was accomplished."

"The treasure is there then?" cried Scott the Bugler, "in the vaults of the Convent?"

"Yes, yes," replied Abel, quietly; "but let him finish, and I will interpret to you. There is very little else to come."

"It was done shortly after dawn, and amidst the thick mist that prevailed very few of our troops except the escort knew anything of it; and they believed, as they were told, that the heavy chests they helped to deposit in the cellars of the Convent contained arms and ammunition—that a surprise or some great movement was to be effected, and that the Convent was to be fortified and garrisoned.

"I knew better, but except myself and the noble courtiers who thus looked after themselves, no one else did. That is all, gentlemen."

"And the treasure chests are really there?" asked Charlie Hall.

"I have no doubt about it whatever," replied Abel. "This

fellow knows his life is in our hands, and he dare not tell a lie."

"It's a d—d swindle of those Neapolitan nobs," cried Scott the Bugler, angrily, "to try to rob us of our lawful loot in that way. Why, it belongs to us, at least it would belong to us when we took Capua by assault. The mean paltry hounds—without the pluck to fight—trying to cheat brave men out of their rights!"

Scott's indignation at being robbed of prospective loot, to be get at the capture of a fortress against which we had not yet begun to make siege approaches was amusing.

"Ah! but," said Abel, "they haven't succeeded; the dirty humbugs have outwitted themselves; and now, if all go well to work, we shall get the whole lot of it between us seven."

A few more questions were asked, which Abel was able to answer satisfactorily.

He had learned from the prisoner that he knew where the treasure was hidden, covered with faggots and brushwood, in the vaults nearest to Capua. Also that the Neapolitan nobles, though dissatisfied in being able to get entire possession of and hold the Convent, yet thought their wealth much safer there than in Capua. They did not suppose that any one would guess at treasure being left undefended, and made up their minds, if Cialdini and Victor Emmanuel advanced, and Kink Francis fled, to go over to the conquerors, and then of course, their property would be secured to them, and they would be in high favour with the new rulers of the kingdom.

Loud, and fervent too, was the determination avowed of getting possession of their treasure—a fitting punishment for the intended treason and desertion of these time-servers.

It was decided, then, that the treasure should be ours, and that the prisoner should himself act as guide; in which office, if he failed to acquit himself to our entire satisfaction, the mild penalty was to be instant death.

This was explained to him, and he declared himself willing to accept the conditions, and seemed so cheerful when he was told that if he did as he promised, and we got the treasure, not only should he go scot free, but have a share himself.

Mr. Edward Trueman, of the 20th Middlesex, however, did not seem to fancy the proposed adventure much. He called our recollection to a general order in which all looting and—as we choose to call it—foraging was strictly forbidden: and he suggested also that our exploit, if we succeeded, might be called robbing a convent, which offence, or anything of the kind, and violence to a woman, Garibaldi invariably and sternly punished with death.

But he was vociferously put down. Robbing a convent was one thing, and taking lawful loot from a set of rascally scoundrels who had hidden it in a convent was quite another.

And as to the general order forbidding foraging on the enemy, that, it was urged (with good reason, too), was a mere form in all armies, which in active warfare was always a dead letter.

So it was settled that the treasure was to be ours.

Thereupon we set about maturing a plan to get possession of it with the greatest possible certainty, and with the least possible danger. Of course, as soldiers, we knew that nothing could be done without perilling our lives, and we were prepared to risk them.

After several days had passed over, all which time we kept Abel Smith's prisoner in our guard-room, unknown to any one but ourselves, our plans were all ready.

And when we had finally settled everything one night after supper, we fixed on the next night as that on which the attempt was to be made.

Edward Trueman was still a source of great anxiety to us. He was so obviously ill at ease, nervous, fidgety, and uncomfortable.

He knew so much, however, of the proposed adventure—everything, in fact—that at all hazards it was necessary he should be with us, and committed to it equally with ourselves.

"I don't like that cove at all," said Scott the Bugler to me one night, nodding towards the gentleman in question. "He funks it, and there's a chance of his spoiling all. His heart ain't in the right place. I think we must give him a regular good scare—let him know that if he tries to back out or split

we'll have his life. Charlie, here," speaking of Hall, who was close by, "can make him fight, and shoot him."

"Oh! I'll shoot him fast enough if he'll stand up before me. I never liked him. He's neither of use nor ornament."

And they did give him a scare.

This was how it was done.

The same night I had just lain down, wrapped in my blanket, when Trueman came in, the ladder being left down for him and another.

Scott and Charlie Hall were asleep, or pretended to be so.

A minute or so after the gallant volunteer had lain down, Scott rose up on his elbow, and nudging Charlie, who was next to him, said:

"Charlie, are you awake?"

"Yes. What do you want?" was the reply, in a sleepy tone.

"I say, *let's kill Trueman to-night!* He goes on sentry at twelve."

"Oh, all right! was the cool reply. "*You kill him. I'm so thundering sleepy.*"

"Well, it don't matter much for to-night. I was thinking he might split. I don't like his manner quite, and he's a nuisance; but I'll keep a sharp look-out on him, and if I think he's up to any mischief, down he goes—down among the dead men—you understand?"

"All right," said Charlie, yawning: "you kill him and have done with it. *I'm too sleepy to-night.*"

"Well, I think I'll let him be to-night, and if I don't like the look of him, we'll settle him to-morrow."

"All right. Good night."

Greatly amused, I lay still for some few minutes, and then got up, and going to the stove, lit a piece of paper for a pipe-light.

I looked round the little room, and saw the face of Edward Trueman, pale as death, with the perspiration on his forehead. He was wide awake, and I was well satisfied that Scott and Charlie Hall had given him a pretty good scare.

Next day he was very careful, and (probably thinking himself in imminent danger of being murdered) was as willing

and eager as any of us, to all appearance, for the attempt on the treasure.

CHAPTER IV

HOW WE GOT THE GOLD AND SILVER PLATE.

Our plan was simple, and yet wanted care, skill, and courage in the execution.

We had provided a strong cart on hire (our little rickety thing would be useless for any heavy weight), also a strong horse. Our own we intended to put on in front when we had loaded the cart with gold and silver plate.

We arranged with our comrades so that none of us had any sentry duty on this eventful night.

Early in the evening the strong cart we had hired, with one horse, was sent out, ostensibly to bring in a load of wood.

Later on, our own animal was taken on to the appointed rendezvous.

Trueman's duty was to take the horse to water, feed him, and so on, so that the animal knew him. On this occasion I accompanied him, and at nine o'clock we all met together at an appointed spot, about a mile from the Convent—eight of us, including the prisoner.

The night was all that could be wished—a moon, but cloudy, so that there was just light enough for us to make our way, and not too much.

We had to make a long circuit to get in the vicinity of the Convent without coming across our own sentries, or perhaps officers on their rounds.

All this we had arranged and studied thoroughly beforehand, and when we reached a spot within a quarter of a mile and in sight of the Convent, we thought justly that the most difficult part of the undertaking had been accomplished.

We were now far beyond our own extreme line of outposts, and were no longer in fear of being challenged by our own soldiers or officers.

There stood the Convent, looking black and gloomy, a huge ungainly pile; and after a brief halt we started on slowly and cautiously—two in front, one on either flank of the cart, and one behind.

Arrived safely within a hundred yards of the Convent, perforce the cart and horses had to stop, for there was a deep watercourse, the bridge over which had been destroyed, and the ground was very rough and altogether unsuitable for a cart, or, indeed, a horse.

Trueman and Charlie Hall were left in charge of the cart and horses. Charlie faithfully promised that he would keep a bright look out on the man we could not help distrusting, and knock him down with the butt end of his rifle if he thought he meant treachery, or tried to bolt.

And we knew Charlie would keep his word.

So off we started—five of us, with the prisoner—for the El Dorado of our hopes, where lay the treasure—chest of gold and silver, and lots of other valuables most likely.

In a minute or so we stood outside the courtyard gates of the Convent, and paused for a moment to reconnoitre. Behind us, as we stood at the right angle of the Convent wall looking towards Capua, was the wooded ground which extended as far as the foot of St. Angelo, relieved in places by patches of scrub or rows of brush-like hedges along the sides of the many watercourses.

Before us was the open plain before the fortress—a plain purposely cleared so as to give no shelter to an enemy from the guns of the bastions.

Standing thus, we looked out on the frowning battlements, and could see the churches and public buildings of Capua.

And, unfortunately, as we looked out on Capua, Capua could look out on us, or the Convent where we were.

We had no difficulty in finding entrance to the old building, which was entirely deserted—unless, indeed, as the prisoner averred, crossing himself devoutly, it was haunted by the ghosts of dead friars, monks, and nuns.

However, of these airy denizens of another world we saw nothing, and hastened to search for the treasure. Through winding stone passages, lofty vaults and chambers, corridors lined by massive pillars, through the now dark, deserted, and dismal chapel, down a flight of damp stone steps which led to the cellars beneath, we followed our guide, who, with hands pinioned behind him, in case of attempted treachery, walked immediately in front of Abel Smith and Scott, each of whom

had a revolver ready to shoot him down on the least signs of anything wrong.

The hollow echoing of our footsteps, reverberating from the massive stone vaults, sounded solemn and gloomy, and we slowly made our way along by the light of our small lantern, which seemed only to make the darkness all around more palpable.

We had left our rifles stacked altogether in the chapel, as we considered that there was not much fear of danger, as our guide new full well that our revolvers would quickly settle his business did he attempt anything.

At last we came to a heap of brushwood at the end of a small vault, with barrels, which doubtless one time had contained wine, on either side.

"Noble sirs," said our guide in Italian, pointing, "beneath that the treasure chests are."

Placing one of our number as sentry about twenty yards down the corridor, in order to listen and give warning of anything that might indicate danger, we set to work with desperate energy, to remove, first, the brush and furze, and then a quantity of faggots.

In five minutes the greater part was cleared away and then our eager eyes beheld, by the dim light, a number of wooden boxes or chests, iron-bound and studded with nails. Each one was about two feet long, a foot and a half in breadth, and the same in depth.

"Il tresora!" said our guide, laconically.

"The treasure!" cried Abel Smith, "the treasure!"

"The treasure!" we all echoed.

And the sentry down the dark passage, hearing our words, shouted to us—

"The treasure!—hurrah!" and then forthwith deserting his post, ran to share the sight.

I took hold of one of the two handles each box had, and found I could with difficulty lift it. I judged the weight to be about a hundred and quarter—a tolerable load for two men to carry.

Abel Smith had brought with him a hatchet and small crow-bar, and forthwith commenced to knock the padlock off this first box and break it open; for it was nailed down besides.

And then a splendid sight met our eyes.

Partly covered with hay and straw, we saw vessels, plates, and dishes of various shapes, and a very brief examination told us that they were all solid gold and silver.

The first thing I took hold of was a large tankard with two handles. It was magnificently engraved, and I knew by the appearance and weight that it was solid gold. It could not have been less than five pounds in weight, and must have been worth, I should say, £300 sterling.

Another chest was broken up, and another, with a like result.

Enormous bowls of solid silver and gold; great candlesticks; flat shallow dishes, with figures in bas-relief of solid gold, a foot in circumference—those and numerous other articles, all of the same precious metals, met our astonished gaze.

Making a rough guess by counting the chests in the tier, we judged that there must be between forty and fifty of these treasure boxes.

It was a dazzling sight, and I for one felt almost intoxicated at the sight of such prodigious wealth. It was some time before we could calm ourselves—could recover from the excitement which this magnificent display caused.

Abel Smith re-called us to the necessity for immediate action.

“Now, lads,” he cried, “to work! It’s about midnight, and we must carry all those chests of treasure up above and cart them away to a place of safety before daylight. There are six of us here. Let each two lift a chest and carry it up. Your prisoner must help, of course.”

We set to work with a will, and in an hour’s time we had loaded the cart with nine boxes, which weighed pretty well half a ton, as much as the horses could draw over the heavy uneven ground.

We had decided that it would not be prudent, or even possible, to convey such chests through our camp to our own place—it would have been madness to attempt it. So we decided to conceal nearly all somewhere within our lines, and then remove it by degrees to Santa Maria, and thence on to Naples.

Rather more than a quarter of a mile from the Convent, and towards our position, and if not exactly within our lines, still

nearer there than the enemy, was a ravine, into which ran a ditch always muddy and damp, but not holding water except in very wet weather. There was a big clump of brushwood all round this ditch, and here we decided we would hide our treasure.

To this place then we forthwith carted our first load, safely deposited it, and then returned for another. We now might fairly reckon we had got possession of the two ton of gold and silver plates.

CHAPTER V

HOW WE WERE SURPRISED BY THE ENEMY'S DRAGOONS.

BEFORE again descending into the vaults of the Convent, we held council together as to the best method of proceeding.

"It ain't altogether the thing for us all to go down together—seems to me like tempting fate. The clouds are clearing away, and by moonlight we may be seen from Capua. Some of us ought to be on the look-out to give warning."

"There's that chap at the cart," observed the sailor, alluding to Trueman.

"Oh! he's no good—not to be trusted as far as you can sec. It's my belief that if he saw the enemy coming, he'd bolt and never wait to give us warning."

Finally it was arranged that two of the party should post themselves as sentries on either side of the Convent, and keep a bright look-out towards Capua, while Trueman was left in charge of the horses and cart, which stood at about two hundred yards from the Convent, tolerably well concealed by a large bush and tree.

We had a reason for not bringing the cart close up to the Convent.

The ground was very heavy, rough, and difficult, and in case of a sudden alarm, even without a load its progress must necessarily be slow.

Moreover, the cart and two horses was a conspicuous object, and if we brought it up and left it by the Convent while we went down to carry up the chests, a task of half an hour, the enemy would have had time to reach us supposing the cart had been seen.

Whereas by bringing up nine or ten chest-loads, and piling them all ready, then bringing up the cart and loading, even if we were seen we should be able to reach the hiding-place we had chosen for the treasure, and get back within our lines long before the enemy could come up. We did not anticipate that they would discover the place we had fixed on for hiding the chests, for it was well chosen.

And, besides, if they should advance, we reckoned that a force would be sent to drive them back the instant the skirmishing became heavy.

All things considered, we thought we had made very excellent arrangements, and I for one felt assured of success, and felt myself already a rich man.

In case of an alarm, Trueman, who was left in charge of the horses and cart, was strictly enjoined to make for the trees on the side of the Convent, opposite to the direction in which was the hiding-place of the chests we had already removed.

This for two reasons. On the side where was the cart, the brushwood, and scrub, there were scarce any trees suitable to give shelter to men retreating from a superior force, or from cavalry.

And, in the second place, it was desirable that, if discovered, the enemy should be led away from the place where was deposited our acquired treasure.

Scott the Bugler and I were left alone on sentries, while the others went below to bring up the chests. One by one, ten chests were brought up, and then a signal was made and the cart brought up and loaded.

Two besides Trueman went with it, and deposited the second load in the ditch with the first lot; our enterprise approached a successful termination.

Two more such loads and the whole of the chests would, I calculated, have been removed. Even as it was, we had got possession of a great treasure, and something whispered to me that it would be well to make sure of what we had.

For the night was fast waning, and already I could see a faint red tint in the east.

The moon, too, shone brightly, and the sky was now nearly clear of clouds.

Notwithstanding the utmost caution, then, it was quite possible that sharp eyes from Capua could see moving objects about the Convent, the cart especially being conspicuous.

Looking towards the plain, I saw something dark moving under the shadow of the fortifications, not coming in our direction, but going sideways.

I was about to call out to Scott, when it vanished, and a cloud at the same moment passing off from the face of the moon, convinced me what was the cause.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW WE EMPTIED SEVERAL SADDLES.

"TANTIVI! tantivi!"

Clear as a bell rang out Scott's bugle, and I started and absolutely dropped my rifle as I heard the sharp quick notes of the "alarm."

I instantly picked it up again, and looked eagerly round for the cause of this sudden alarm.

"Take it easy," cried Scott. "Look to your rifle and revolver. They'll be on us in two minutes. Cavalry! Don't stir till the others come up; then we'll all take to the trees together."

Again the bugle sounded, and before the last notes had died away our comrades came rushing up from the vaults.

"There they come, lads!" said Scott, coolly, having come over to where I stood, close to the big gate leading in to the building.

He pointed as he spoke, and there, plain to all of us, was to be seen a body of horse careering at a gallop over the plain.

They were not coming straight for us, but took a course which would cut us off from our own lines.

There was yet time, however, for us to reach the trees, and, after a few brief words, off we started.

It was no longer a question of treasure or no treasure, but of life or death.

The prisoner, pale as death, and trembling, exclaimed, after a hard look at the horsemen now rapidly approaching—

"I am lost! It is the squadron of the Count Pepoli, friend

of my master, the Marquis Campicelli. They will know that their treasure has been attempted, and will show no mercy to you or to me."

Then Abel Smith spoke,—

"I reckon there's about forty of them; there are seven of us. I calculate that, with the shelter of the trees, I can knock half-a-dozen out of their saddles with this bit of hollow iron."

Tapping his small-bore rifle affectionately as he spoke, he started for the trees, the nearest of which was about two hundreds yards away.

The prisoner was no longer an object of interest to us; but he, from regard to his own safety, ran with us to shelter, well knowing that he had no mercy to expect if captured. We gained the wood in ample time, and each of us singled out a tree, and while we took breath, saw to our rifles.

"It's all right," shouted Abel Smith, "we can keep them off with our rifles till the fire brings up the outposts and the battalion at the farm. We've got twenty-one chests of plate, all safe."

A yell from Scott, who was next tree to me, here called my attention, and the next instant I saw him bring his rifle to his shoulder and fire, not at the enemy (now cautiously trotting up in extended order), but at our own comrade Trueman.

"Missed by——!" he cried.

It was not for a moment or two that I understood the reason for his firing at Trueman, and his annoyance at having missed.

Trueman, instead of running to the trees as he had been told, started off for the nearest shelter, which was the big clump of brushwood, by the ditch and ravine, where we had deposited the treasure chests.

The cowardly fool was tempted to this course from the fact that the troop of horse were approaching the wood in which we had taken shelter, and that the scrub was nearer.

The fact of his running towards our concealed treasure would infallibly lead the enemy to the place, whereas, had he made for the trees, it was quite likely that the chests we had concealed would never be discovered. And what made it more awkward still was the fact that when Trueman started to

run, the leading horse, which he had been in the habit of feeding and leading to water, started after him, the others following, and dragging the empty cart after them.

"Shoot him," cried Scott, after having missed himself; "he'll lead 'em right to our plant."

Crack went Abel's rifle.

He missed.

Then I blazed away and also missed, as did every one of us, and Trueman gained the shelter of the scrub. At the same moment the cart upset, and the harness breaking, the two horses got loose and galloped away.

It was now time to look after ourselves, for the horsemen were approaching, having spread out in semicircle.

Abel Smith was the first to fire, and this time with good effect, for we had the pleasure an instant afterwards of seeing a dragoon fall headlong from the saddle, while his horse galloped riderless over the plain.

Still, however, the others came on, and then followed in quick succession the sharp cracks of six rifles.

Two horses fell, and one man tumbled his saddle. This shot I took the credit of myself, as I had specially singled the fellow out.

This staggered them considerably, and they drew rein.

But half-a-dozen of them, I now saw, had struck off to the left in pursuit of Trueman, and passing the overturned cart, dashed into the scrub, which, though good enough for concealment, was valueless as a barrier to a dragoon.

We had now all our work to do to make good our lives.

There were only six of us, for the prisoner could not be depended on, as he, like Trueman, was a rank cur.

Retreating from tree to tree, we kept the dragoons at bay every now and then knocking one from the saddle.

The sound of sharp firing soon brought the outposts to our support, and as cavalry could do nothing against sharpshooters in a wood they finally sheered off.

The situation was now one of intense and desperate excitement. As for myself, my feelings were of a strangely mixed character—anger, disappointment, and well-founded fear for my own life, all mixed together.

Anger at the cowardly folly of Edward Trueman; bitter

disappointment at the probability of our losing the treasure we had considered our own; and deep concern at our possible fate.

On paper it may seem a very fine and heroic thing to fight on foot against mounted dragoons, relying on stout heart, steady hand and true eye, and to knock off your enemies with ease and expedition; but as a matter of fact, I can assure you it is a very ticklish affair.

If you miss your aim—and it's no use shooting till the horseman is quite close—or if your rifle misses fire, the chances are his heavy sabre won't miss fire, and down you go.

We fell back thus for about a quarter of a mile, and I was just congratulating myself on having at all events saved my life, when a shout from Scott, who was behind a tree about fifty yards on my right, called my attention to two dragoons who, having made a long circuit, were charging down towards me from the left rear.

They were coming along diagonally towards me and Scott, who were the two nearest, and if they kept on they must perforce swoop down on me first. My rifle was loaded, and I hastened to see to my revolver.

My position was now one of extreme peril. The tree beside which I stood was a small one, and could not afford me sufficient shelter from a sweeping sabre cut.

My hope was to shoot one of the coming foes with my rifle, and trust to my revolver to dispose of the other.

You may well believe, all of you, that my heart beat fast as I took deliberate aim at the nearest of the two horsemen as they came on together nearly abreast.

He saw me aiming at him, and stooped his helmeted head, so as to get shelter behind that of the horse.

I could not get a good sight at him—only of his neck, left shoulder, and back.

However, I was bound to fire, and when he was within twenty yards I pulled trigger.

Fortunately for me I had made allowances for the divergences of all rifles at close quarters, and aimed at top of the horse's chest a little to the right.

The effect was instantaneous. The animal gave a sudden plunge, reared up, and then fell heavily on his side and

flank, throwing the rider some distance—where he lay, stunned by the fall and the effect of my bullet, which, after plunging through the neck of the poor horse, had buried itself in the dragoon's shoulder.

Although thus successful against one foe, I had the other to deal with.

He came on, brandishing his heavy sabre, and not pausing an instant at witnessing the overthrow of his comrade.

He knew of course that my rifle was now empty, and supposing I had no revolver, might fairly consider me at his mercy; for the tree, though it might enable me to ward off the sword cuts for a time, could not offer any efficient shelter.

I will own that I felt desperately inclined to run for it; a sort of instinctive impulse prompted me to do so, to have yielded to which would have been utter folly—the result almost certain death. I conquered this feeling and stood my ground steadily, keeping well behind the tree, revolver in hand, my eyes firmly fixed on the dragoon, who came charging up, yelling loudly, and making his sword whistle in the air.

When he was quite close I fired and missed.

Instantly I fired another barrel.

The horse reared and plunged, and I perceived that my pistol bullet, had inflicted a slight wound.

The dragoon, however, urged him on by means of the spurs, and made a savage cut at my head, slicing a great piece of bark off the tree.

I again pulled the trigger of my revolver, but this time it unfortunately missed fire altogether.

He had now got his horse close up to the tree, and was cutting and slashing right and left so viciously that I was forced to pull back a pace or two, as by no amount of dodging could I otherwise escape.

I kept my rifle in my left hand, while with the revolver in my right I again fired at the Neapolitan trooper. I hit him, but only slightly, and the next moment he spurred his horse past me, and as he swept by delivered a savage cut at my head

I warded off the full force of it by means of my rifle, which I held over my head.

The force of the blow, however, beat down my guard, and I was hurled to the ground.

At the same moment the dragoon swept by me, borne on by the impetus his horse had acquired

It was quite twenty yards before he could turn his horse, and had I not been half stunned by the violence of the concussion, I might have struggled up and again got behind the tree and tried one more shot with my revolver. As it was the dragoon had turned his horse, and was again riding towards me, with sword all ready to put an end to my life, by thrust or slash, as might suit his humour, just as I raised myself on my elbow.

There was no time for me to rise ere he was upon me.

Instinctively I held my rifle over my face and head, to guard off the sword cut I saw coming.

There was no hope, no chance. My last moments had come, and with a sickening feeling of terror in view of instant death (a terror which even the bravest may own to without shame), I tried to shape a prayer.

I saw the uplifted sword, saw the glaring angry eyes of the foe, heard his fierce cry of triumph and savage fury.

For a moment the horse was almost motionless.

He raised himself in his stirrups.—I held my breath.—A sharp cry!

I expected to feel the cruel steel, when, instead thereof, a heavy body falling close beside me awoke me from my trance-like state of terror.

Never shall I forget the agony of those few seconds.

When I came to myself I beheld the dragoon lying dead beside me, his horse having galloped riderless away.

A blue mark, from which a stream of blood poured, just above one eye, told me the cause of his death—a rifle bullet; and looking around, I beheld almost fifty yards off Abel Smith behind a tree, quietly reloading his deadly small-bore.

He had seen my danger, watched and waited for his chance, and just in the very nick of time brought down the dragoon and saved my life. But it was a close shave, and I never want to be so near sudden death again.

By the time I had recovered from the effects of the shock to the nerves—and I don't mind owning that when I got up I was all of a tremble, so much so that I could scarcely reload my rifle—I saw that all danger was over, except from a chance shot; for a considerable number of our sharpshooters and skirmishers now filled the woods, and it seemed pretty certain that we should easily drive the enemy back.

Once more our hearts bounded with hope as we thought of the treasure and the good chance we had of gaining it.

We now all approached together, skirmishing from tree to tree. Only one was wounded, and he but slightly, and after a brief discussion it was settled that we should post ourselves as close as possible to the clump of brushwood where we had deposited the chests of plate, and by a close sharpshooting fire keep the enemies' skirmishers away from our treasure.

A bugle call rang out, followed by another and another, till we heard the same notes sounded half a dozen times.

An oath broke from our bugler, Scott:—

"No, no! we can't go back," he cried. "The enemy are retreating; we seven at all events must stand our ground."

It was the retreat and recall for skirmishers we heard sounded, ordered by some officer in command, who had reason to believe probably that an attack was threatened at some other point.

Again and again the unwelcome notes rang forth, and we saw the red-shirts at once begin to fall back from tree to tree.

"We'll stand to it, lads," said Ned Smith, in a hoarse voice, "and won't give up yet. See, there's some of those dragoons prowling about our upset cart. Let's get a little closer and empty some of their saddles; that may teach them to keep their distance."

We hastened to follow this advice, and a sharp fire soon sent the dragoons scattering over the plain.

But we were not to be left to carry out our programme in peace.

Before we had approached much nearer the goal of our desires, the clump and overturned cart, a mounted officer attended by several others, and a small guard of guides galloped up.

"Now then, men, fall back; haven't you heard the recall?"

Fall back and join your companies. No more firing: back you go at the double—there'll be work at St. Angelo presently."

It was General Dunne, our commander, and we dared not—could not disobey.

"Ah, General," pleaded Scott the Bugler, "just let us clear the enemy out of those bushes first. We'll do it in a brace of shakes. There ain't more than a score of 'em and we will drive 'em out with the bayonet."

"No, no, lads," said Dunne, "fall back—back you go. Don't you hear the bugle calls all over the field?"

Then turning to an officer near him, he said with a pleased smile—

"What gluttons these fellows of mine are for fighting!"

He did not dream that it was not altogether for the fun of fighting, that we wanted to drive the enemy from the bushes—but for our chests of gold and silver plate.

Well, we were obliged to fall back, and could not get to the front again that day.

We did next day though, and there found the overturned cart and the place where we had deposited the treasure.

But the chests were all gone, and in lieu thereof we discovered the dead body of Edward Trueman, whose cowardice and folly had lost us two tons of plate and him his life.

"That's all my lads," concluded Mr. Royston, "except the moral, which is this—

"Whenever you go to get a treasure, rob a convent, or undertake any little adventure of the kind, take care that all concerned are good men and true."

The story met with unbounded applause, and the moral was received also with approval and laughter.

Then, after a brief pause, for general talk and remarks on the mate's adventure, the next story was begun by the doctor.

The Pirates' Treasure:

A TALE OF THE SPANISH MAIN.

MANY years ago, when I was young and vigorous I was an actor in the following adventure:—

I had long been waiting and hoping in vain for an appoint-

ment as surgeon to a regiment in the East India Company's service.

At last it came, and under such circumstances that to embrace the opportunity I was forced to set sail at once, and could not wait to choose the vessel in which to take a passage.

Thus it came to pass that I found myself on board a ship whose captain I knew to be a murderer!

This is how it occurred :—

THE PIRATE'S STORY.

After many months of anxious and painful expectancy, I at length succeeded in obtaining my appointment in the situation I had so ardently wished for.

Despairing at my apparent want of success I had given up all hopes, and had engaged to go as surgeon in the *Clydesdale* to the East Indies, when the favourable result of my friends' exertions changed the aspect of my affairs.

My instructions set forth the necessity of my being at Surinam by a certain day, otherwise I should be too late to join the corps to which I was appointed, which, on the ceding up of the place to the Dutch, was to proceed to Canada.

As it wanted only two months of that period, it became necessary to inquire for some vessel without loss of time.

Giving up my engagements with the *Clydesdale*, I proceeded to the harbour, and after a toilsome search succeeded in discovering a ship chartered by a Glasgow company lying ready at the West quay, and to sail with that evening's tide.

While I stood examining the vessel from the pier, two sailors, who seemed to be roving idly about, stopped, and began to converse by my side.

"Has the old *Dart* got all her hands, Tom," said one, "that she has her ensign up for sailing? They say she is sold to the lubberly Dutchmen now. What cheer to lend her a hand out, and get our sailing penny for a glass of grog?"

"No, no! bad cheer," replied the other; "mayhap I didn't tell you that I made a trip in her four years ago; and a cleaner or livelier thing there is not on the water; but there is a limb of the big devil in her that is enough to cause her to sink to the bottom. It was in our voyage out that he did for Bill

Burnet with the pump-sounding rod, because the little fellow snivelled a bit, and was not handy to jump when he was ordered aloft to set the fore-royal. It was his first voyage, and the boy was mortal afraid to venture ; but the captain swore he would make him, and, in his passion, struck him a rap with the iron rod and killed him. When he saw what he had done, he lifted and hove him over the side. And many a long day the men wondered what had become of little Bill, for they were all below at dinner, and none but myself saw the transaction. It was needless for me to complain and get him overhauled, as there were no witnesses ; but I left the ship, and berths would be scarce before I would sail with him again."

Knowing what tyrants shipmasters are in general, and how much their passengers' comfort depends on them, I was somewhat startled by this piece of information respecting the temper of a man I proposed to sail with. But necessity has no law. The circumstances, probably, was much misrepresented, and from a simple act of discipline exaggerated into a wanton act of cruelty.

But be that as it might, my affairs were urgent. There was no other vessel for the same port. I must either take my passage or run the risk of being superseded. Such a thing was not to be thought of, so I went and secured my berth.

As my preparations were few and trifling, I had everything on board and arranged just as the vessel was unmooring from the quay.

During the night we got down to the Clock light-house, and stood off and on, waiting for the captain, who had remained behind to get the ship cleared out at the Custom-house. Soon afterwards he joined us, and the pilot leaving us in the return boat, we stood down the Fourth under all our canvass.

For four weeks we had a swift and pleasant passage. The *Dart* did not belie her name, for, being American-built and originally a privateer, she sailed uncommonly fast, generally running at the rate of ten knots an hour.

As I had expected. Captain Marbone proved to be, in point of acquirements, not at all above the common run of shipmasters. He was haughty and overbearing, and domineered

over the crew with a high hand; in return for which he was evidently feared and detested by them all. He had been many years in the West Indies; part of which time he had ranged as commander of a privateer, and had, between the fervid suns of such low latitudes, and the copious use of grog, become of a rich mahogany colour, or something between vermilion and the tint of a sheet of new copper. He was a middle sized man, square built, with a powerful and muscular frame. His aspect, naturally harsh and forbidding, was rendered more so by the sinister expression of his left eye, which had been nearly forced out by some accident; and the lineaments of his countenance expressed plainly that he was passionate and furious in the extreme. In consequence of this I kept rather distant and aloof; and, except at meals, we seldom exchanged more than ordinary civilities.

By our reckoning, our ship had now got into the latitude of the Bermudas, when one evening at sunset, the wind, which had hitherto been favourable, fell at once into dead calm. The day had been clear and bright; but now huge masses of dark and conical shaped cloud, began to tower over each other in the western horizon, which being tinged with the rays of the sun, displayed that lurid and deep brassy tint so well known to mariners as the token of an approaching storm.

All the sailors were of opinion that we should have a coarse night, every precaution good seamanship could suggests was taken to make the vessel snug before the gale came on.

The oldest boys were sent up to hand and send down the royal top-gallant sails and strike the masts, while the topsails were close reefed. These preparations were hardly accomplished when the wind shifted, and took us aback with such violence as nearly to capsize the vessel. The ship was put round as soon as possible, and brought-to till the gale should fall; while all hands remained on deck in case of an emergency.

About ten, in the interval of a squal, we heard a gun fired as a signal of distress. The night was as black as pitch, but the flash showed us that the stranger was not far to leeward; so, to avoid drifting on the wreck during the darkness, the main top-sail was braced round and filled, and the ship hauled to windward. In this manner we kept alternately

beating and heaving-to, as the gale rose and fell, till the morning broke, when, through the haze, we perceived a small vessel with the masts carried away.

As the wind had taken off, the captain had gone to bed ; so it was the mate's watch on deck. The steersman, an old grey-headed seaman, named James Gemmal, proposed to bear down and save the people, saying he had been twice wrecked himself, and knew what it was to be in such a situation. As the captain was below, the mate was irresolute what to do, being aware that the success of the speculation depended on their getting to Surinam before it was given up ; however, he was at length persuaded, the helm was put up, and the ship bore away.

As we neared the wreck and were standing by the mizen shrouds with our glasses, the captain came up from the cabin. He looked up with astonishment to the sails, and the direction of the vessel's head, and in a voice of suppressed passion, said as he turned to the mate, "What is the meaning of this, Mr. Wyllie? Who has dared to alter the ship's course without my leave—when you know very well that we shall hardly be in time for the market, make what expedition we may?"

The young man was confounded by this unexpected challenge, and stammered out something about Gemmal having persuaded him.

"It was me, sir!" respectfully interposed the old sailor, wishing to direct the storm from the mate. "I thought you wouldn't have the heart to leave those poor people to perish without lending a hand to save them. We should neither be Christians nor true seamen to desert her and—"

"Damn you and the wreck, you old canting rascal! Do you pretend to stand there and preach to me?" thundered the captain, his fury breaking out, "I'll teach you to disobey my orders!—I'll give you something to think of!" and seizing a capstan-bar which lay near him, he hurled it at the steersman with all his might. The blow was effectual. One end of it struck him across the head with such force as to sweep him in an instant from the wheel, and to dash him with violence against the lee bulwarks, where he lay bleeding and motionless.

"Take that and be damned," exclaimed the wretch, as he took

the helm and sang out to the men—"stand by sheets and braces—hard a-lee—let go," and in a twinkling the yards were braced round, and the *Dart*, laid within six points of the wind, was flying through the water.

Meanwhile Gemmal was lying without any one daring to assist him; for the crew were so confounded that they seemed quite undetermined how to act. I stepped to him, therefore, and the mate following my example, we lifted him up. As there was no appearance of respiration, I placed my hand on his heart, but pulsation had entirely ceased; the old man was dead. The bar had struck him directly on the temporal bone, and had completely fractured that part of his skull.

"He is a murdered man Captain Marbone," said I, laying down the body; "murdered without cause or provocation."

"None of your remarks, sir," he retorted. "What the devil have you to do with it? Do you mean to stir up my men to mutiny?—or do you call disobeying my orders no provocation? I'll answer it to those who have a right to ask; but till then let me see the man who dare open his mouth in this ship."

"I promise you," returned I, "that though you rule and tyrannize here at present, your power shall have a termination, and you shall be called to account for your conduct in this day's work. Rest assured that *this* blood shall be required at your hands, though you have hitherto escaped punishment for what has stained them already."

This allusion to the murder of little Bill Burnet seemed to stagger him considerably. He stopped short before me, and while his face grew black with suppressed wrath and fury, whispered "I warn you again, young man, to busy yourself with your own matters, and meddle not with what does not concern you; and belay your slack jaw, or by ——! Rink Marbone will find a way to make it fast for you!" He then turned round and walked forward to the fore-castle.

During this affray no attention had been paid to the wreck, though the crew had set up a yell of despair on seeing us leave them. Signals and shouts were still repeated, and a voice, louder in agony than the rest, implored our help for the love of the blessed Virgin, and offered riches and absolution to the whole ship's company if they would but come back.

The captain was pacing fore and aft without appearing to notice them, when, as if struck with some sudden thought, he lifted his glass to his eye, seemed to hesitate—walked on, and then, all at once changing his mind, he ordered the vessel before the wind.

On speaking the wreck she proved to be a Spanish felucca from the island of Cuba, bound for Curacoa, on the coast of the Caraccas. As they had lost their boats in the storm, and could not leave their vessel, our captain lowered and manned our jolly-boat and went off to them.

After an absence of some hours he returned with the passengers, consisting of an elderly person in the garb of a Catholic priest, a sick gentleman, a young lady, apparently daughter of the latter, and a female black slave. With the utmost difficulty, and writhing under some excruciating pain, the invalid was got on board and carried down to the cabin, where he was laid on a bed on the floor. To the tender of my professional services the invalid returned his thanks and would have declined them, expressing his conviction of being past human art, but the young lady, eagerly catching at even a remote hope of success, implored him, with tears, to accept my offer.

On examination, I found his fears but too well grounded. In his endeavours to assist the crew during the gale, he had been standing near the mast, part of which, or the rigging, having fallen on him, had dislocated several of his ribs and injured his spine beyond remedy. All that could now be done was to afford a little temporary relief from pain, which I did, and leaving him to the care of the young lady and the priest, I left the captain.

On deck I found all bustle and confusion.

The ship was still lying to, and the boats employed in bringing the goods out of the felucca, both of which were the property of the wounded gentleman.

The body of the old man, Gemmal, had been removed somewhere out of sight; no trace of blood was visible, and Captain Marbone seemed desirous to banish all recollections both of our quarrel and its origin.

As the invalid was lying in the cabin, and my state room occupied by the lady and her female attendant, I

got a temporary berth made up for myself in the steerage.

I had not long thrown myself down on my cot, which was only divided from the main cabin by a bulkhead, when I was awakened by the deep groans of the Spaniard. The violence of his pain had again returned, and between the spasms I heard weeping, and the gentle voice of the lady soothing his agony, and trying to impart hopeful prospects to him, which her own hysterical sobs told plainly she did not herself feel. The priest also frequently joined, and urged him to confess. To this advice he remained silent for awhile; but at length he addressed the lady:—

“The padre says true, Isabella! Time wears apace, and I feel that I shall soon be beyond its limits, and above its concerns! But ere I go I would say that which it would impart peace to my mind to disclose. I would seek to leave you at least one human being to befriend and protect you in your utter helplessness. Alas! that Diego di Montaldo’s daughter should ever be thus destitute! Go, my love; I would be alone a little while with the father.”

An agony of tears and sobs was the only return made by the poor girl, while the priest, with gentle violence, led her into the state room.

“Now,” continued the dying man, “listen to me while I have strength. You have only known me as a merchant in Cuba, but such I have not been always. Mine is an ancient and noble family in Catalonia, though I unhappily disgraced it, and have been estranged from it long. I had the misfortune to have weak and indulgent parents, who idolized me as the heir of their house, and did not possess resolution enough to thwart me in any of my wishes or desires, however unreasonable. My boyhood being thus spoilt, it is no matter of wonder that my youth should have proved wild and dissolute. My companions were as dissolute as my myself, and much of our time was spent in gambling and other extravagancies. One evening at play I quarrelled with a young nobleman of high rank and influence. We were both of us hot and passionate, so we drew on the spot and fought, and I had the misfortune to run him through the heart and leave him dead. Not daring to remain longer at home, I fled in disguise to Barcelona,

where I procured a passage in a vessel for the Spanish main. On our voyage we were taken by buccaneers, and the roving and adventurous mode of life of these bold and daring men suiting both my inclination and my finances, I agreed to make one of their number. For many months we were successful in our enterprises; we ranged the whole of the seas and made a number of prizes, some of which were rich ships of our own colonics. In course of time we amassed such a quantity of specie as to make us unwilling to venture it in our own bottom; so we agreed to hide it ashore, and to divide it on our return from our next expedition. But our good fortune, forsook us this time. During a calm the boats of the *Guarda Costa* came on us, overpowered the ship, and made all the crew, except myself and two others, prisoners. We escaped with our boat, and succeeded in gaining the island of Cuba, where both of my comrades died of their wounds. Subsequent events induced me to settle at St. Juan de Buenavista, where I married, and as a merchant prospered and became a rich man. But my happiness lasted not! My wife caught the yellow fever and died, leaving me only this one child. I now loathed the scene of my departed happiness, and felt all the longings of an exile to revisit my native country. For this purpose I converted all my effects into money and am thus far on my way with the hidden treasure, with which I intended to return to Spain. But the green hills of Cantalonia will never more gladden mine eyes. My hopes and wisher were only for my poor girl. Holy father, you know not a parent's feeling, his anxieties, and his fears! The thought of leaving my child to the mercy of strangers—or, it may be, to their barbarities, in this lawless country—is far more dreadful than the anguish of my personal sufferings. With you rests my only hope. Promise me your protection towards her, and the half of all my wealth is yours!"

"Earthly treasures," replied the priest, "avail not with one whose desires are fixed beyond the little handful of dust which perisheth. My life is devoted to the service of my Creator and the conversion of ignorant men—men who have never heard of his salvation. On an arrand of mercy came I to this land; and if the heathen receive it, how much more a daughter of our most holy Church? I therefore, in behalf of

our community, accept of your offer, and swear on this blessed emblem to fulfil all your wishes to the best of my poor abilities."

"Enough, enough!" said Montaldo, "I am satisfied. Among that archipelago of desert islands known by the name of the Roccio, situated on the coast of the province of Venezuela in New Granada, there is one called the Wolf-rock; it is the largest and most northern of the group, and lies the most to seaward. At the eastern point, which runs a little way into the sea, there stands an old vanilla, blasted and withered, and retaining but a single solitary branch. On the eve of the festival of St. Iago, the moon will be at the full in the west. At twenty minutes past midnight she will attain to her brightest altitude in the heavens; and then the shadow of the tree will be thrown due east. Watch till the branch and stem unite and form only one line of shade—mark its extremity, for there, ten feet below the surface, the cask containing the gold is buried. That gold, father, was sinfully got, but fasts and penances have been done, masses without number have been said, and I trust that the blessed Virgin has interceded for the forgiveness of that wickedness! I have now confessed all, and confide in your promise; and as you perform your oath, so will the blessing of a dying man abide with you. I feel faint, dying. Oh, let me clasp my child once more to my heart before I—

Here the rest of the sentence became indistinct, from the death-rattle in his throat. I leaped off my cot and sprung up the hatchway, and had my foot on the top of the companion-ladder, when a piercing shriek from below made me quicken my steps. I missed my hold, and fell on some person stationed on the outside of the cabin door. The person, without saying a single word, rose and ascended the steps; but as he emerged into the faint light which still lingered in the horizon, I fancied I could distinguish him to be the captain. On my entering I found the Spaniard dead, and his daughter lying in a state of insensibility by his side; while the female slave was howling and tearing her hair like one in a frenzy. The priest was entirely absorbed in his devotion, so without disturbing him, I lifted the body and bore her into her state room. The greater part of the night was passed in trying to restore her to sensa-

tion. Fit after fit followed each other in succession, that I began to apprehend the result; but at length the hysterical paroxysm subsided, and tears coming to her relief, she became somewhat composed, when I left her in charge of her attendant.

The next day was spent in taking out the remainder of the felucca's cargo. There seemed now no anxiety on the captain's part to proceed on his voyage, he appeared to have forgotten the necessity expressed on a former occasion of being in port within a limited time. He was often in a state of inebriety, for the wine and spirits of the Spanish were lavishly served out to the whole ship's company, with whom he also mixed more, and banished that haughtiness of bearing which had marked his behaviour hitherto.

In the evening the body of Don Diego was brought upon deck, when the crew, under the direction of the priest, prepared it for its commitment to the deep. The corpse was, as is usual in such cases, wrapped up in the blankets and sheets in which it had lain, and a white napkin was tied over the face and head. In its right hand, which was crossed over the heart, was placed a gold doubloon. Its left held a small bag containing a book and a candle, while on the bosom lay a little crucifix worn by the deceased. It was next enveloped in a hammock with a couple of eight-pound shots, and a bag of ballast to sink it. The hammock was then carefully and closely sown up, and the whole operation finished by having the sail-needle thrust transversely through the nose. At midnight the vessel was hove-to, and all the ship's company assembled at the lee-gangway.

The Spaniards and negroes bore each a burning torch in his hand, the blaze of which, as they held them elevated above their heads, cast a strange and fearful light through the deep darkness, and illumined the ocean far and wide with a supernatural refulgency.

When all was ready, the priest, accompanied by Isabella, came up from the cabin, and the Spaniards, lifting up the body, carried it forward to the waist, where one of the ship's gratings had been put projecting over the side, and on this the corpse was laid with its feet to the water. Around this the torch-bearers formed a circle, and the priest, standing at the head, began the funeral service for the dead at sea.

The wind had now subsided into a gentle breeze, and nothing disturbed the profound silence of the crew during the mass, save the slight splashing of the waves against the windward side of the ship, and the deep-drawn convulsive sobs of the young lady as she stood enveloped in her mantello in the obscurity of the main rigging. Mass being concluded, the priest solemnly chanted the funeral anthem—"May the angels conduct thee into Paradise; may the martyrs receive thee at thy coming; and mayest thou have eternal rest with Lazarus, who was formerly poor!" He then sprinkled the body with holy water and continued, "May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace—amen!"—made the sign of the cross, and the bow-chaser, which had been loaded and made ready for the occasion, firing, the end of the grating was gently elevated, and the corpse heavily plunged into the water; the waves parted, heaving and foaming round the body as it disappeared—when to our horror and astonishment we beheld it the next minute slowly return to the surface, deprived of the canvas covering in which it had been sewed. The dead man came up as he had gone down, in an upright position, and floated a little time with his back to the vessel; but the motion of the water turned him round by degrees till we distinctly saw his face. The head was thrown back, and the eyes wide open; and under the strong stream of light poured on them from the torches, they seemed to glare ghastly and fearfully upwards. His grey hairs, long dishevelled, floated about his face, at times partially obscuring it; and one arm, stretched forth and agitated by the action of the waves, appeared as if in the act of threatening us.

When the first burst of horror had subsided, I caught hold of Isabella to prevent her seeing the body, and was leading her off, when some of the men, lowering their torches from the main chains, whispered that it was the murdered man James Gemmal. The captain had been hitherto looking on with the rest without apparently recognising him, but when the name struck his ear, he shrank back and involuntarily exclaimed, "It's a lie—it's an infamous lie. Who dares to say he was murdered? He went overboard two days ago! But don't let him on board; for God's sake keep him down, or he'll

take us all with him to the bottom! Will nobody shove him off?—Helm a lee!" he shouted out, waving to the steersman; but the man had deserted his post, eager to see what was going on; he therefore ran to the wheel himself and again issued his commands. "Let go the main topsail weather braces, and bring round the yard! Let them go I say!" His orders were speedily executed. The vessel gathered way, and we quickly shot past the body of the old man.

For several days after this we pursued our course with a favourable wind, which drove us quickly forward on our voyage. The captain now kept himself constantly intoxicated, seldom made his appearance in the cabin, but left us altogether to the care of the steward.

All subordination was now at an end. His whole time was spent among the seamen, with whom he mixed familiarly, and was addressed by them without the slightest portion of that respect or deference commonly paid to the captain of a vessel.

The appearance of the men, also, was much altered. From the careless mirth and gaiety and the characteristic good humour of sailors, there was now a sullenness, a gloom, only visible; a constant whispering—a constant caballing was going on; a perpetual discussion, as if some design of moment was in agitation, or some step of deep importance was about to be taken.

All sociality and confidence towards each other were banished. In place of conversing together in a body as formerly, they now walked about in detached parties, and among them the boatswain and carpenter seemed to take an active lead.

Yet, in the midst of all this disorder, a few of our own crew kept themselves separate, taking no share in the general consultation; but, from the anxiety expressed in their countenances, as well as in that of the mate, I foresaw some storm was brooding and about to burst on our heads.

Since Montaldo's death Isabella had been in the habit of leaving her cabin after sunset to enjoy the coolness of the evening breeze; and in this she was sometimes joined by the priest, but more frequently was only attended by her slave.

One evening she came up as usual, and, after walking backwards and forwards on deck till the dew began to fall, she

turned to go below ; but just as she approached the companion-way, one of the negroes, who now, in the absence of all discipline, lounged about the quarter-deck without rebuke, shut down the head, and, throwing himself on it, declared that none should make him rise without the reward of a kiss.

This piece of insolence was received with an encouraging laugh by his fellows, and several slang expressions of wit were uttered, which were loudly applauded by those around.

Without a word of remonstrance Isabella timidly stooped, and would have attempted getting down the ladder without disturbing the slave, when, burning with indignation, I seized the rascal by the collar and pitched him head foremost along the deck.

In an instant he got on his legs, and pulling a long clasp knife out of his pocket, and with a loud imprecation he made towards me. All the other negroes likewise made a motion to assist him, and I expected to be assailed on all hands, when the mate interfered, and laying hold of the marlinspike, which I had caught up to defend myself, pushed back as he whispered—

“Are you mad that you interfere? For heaven’s sake, keep quiet, for I have no authority over the crew now.”

And he spoke the truth ; for the negro, brandishing his knife, and supported by his comrades, was again advancing, when the hoarse voice of the boatswain, as he ran to the scene of action, arrested his progress.

“Hallo, you there ! what’s the squill for? Avast—avast—Mingo ! off hands is fair play. Ship that blade of yours, or I’ll send my fist through your ribs, and make daylight shine through them in a minute.”

I related to him the behaviour of the negro, and was requesting him to order the slaves forward, when I was cut short with—

“There are no slaves here, young man. We are all alike free in a British ship ; but damn his eyes for an insolent !—*He* pretend to kiss a pretty girl ! I’ll let him know she belongs to his betters ! The black wench is good enough for him any day. Come, my dear,” he continued, turning to Isabella, “give me the same hire, and I’ll undertake to clear the way for you myself.”

He made as if he meant to approach her, when, careless of what the consequences might be to myself, I hastily stepped forward, and, lifting up the head of the companion, Isabella in an instant darted below.

"This lady is no fit subject for either wit or insolence," said I, shutting the door; "and he is less than man who would insult an unprotected female."

For a little while he stood eyeing me as if hesitating whether he should resent my interference or remain passive; at length he turned slowly and doggedly away, as he muttered—

"You ruffle big and crow with a brisk note, my lad; but I've seen myself do as wonderful a thing as twist your wind-pipe, and send you over the side to cool yourself a bit; and so I would serve you in the turning of a wave, if it wasn't that we may have use for you yet! I see in what quarter the wind sets; but mind your eye—for sink me if I don't keep a sharp look-out ahead over you!"

I now saw that things had come to a crisis; that the crew meant to turn pirates; and I was to be detained among them for the sake of my professional services.

I could not, without a shudder, reflect what must be the fate of Isabella among such a gang of reckless villains; but I firmly resolved that, come what might, my protection and care over her should cease but with my life.

To be prepared for the worst, I immediately went below, loaded my pistols, and concealed them in my breast, securing at the same time all my money and papers about my person.

While thus employed, one of the cabin boys came down for a spy-glass, saying that a sail had hove in sight to windward. Upon this I followed him up, and found the crew collected together, in clamorous consultation as to the course they should follow. Some were for laying to till she came down, and taking her, if a merchantman; and if not, they could easily sheer off. But this motion was overruled by the majority, who judged it best to keep clear, for fear of accidents.

Accordingly, all the spare canvas was set, and we were soon gaining way before the wind.

But the *Dart*, though reckoned the first sailer out of the Clyde when close-hauled on a wind, was by no means so fle when squared away and going free. She had now met with

her match, for the stranger was evidently gaining rapidly on us, and in two hours we saw it was impossible for us to escape.

The priest and I were ordered down, with a threat of instant death if we offered to come on deck, or make any attempt to attract observation.

I now communicated to Isabella my apprehensions with respect to the crew, along with my resolution to leave the vessel should the other prove a man-of-war, and earnestly entreated both her and the priest to take advantage of it also.

She thanked me with a look and smile that told me how sensible she was of the interest I felt in her welfare, and expressed her willingness to be guided by me in whatever way I thought best.

Shortly after this, we heard a gun fired to bring us to, and the *Dart* hailed and questioned as to her port and destination.

The answers, it appeared, were thought evasive and unsatisfactory, for we were ordered to come close under the lee quarter of His Majesty's sloop of war *Tartar*, while they sent to examine our papers.

This was now our only chance, and I resolved that if the officer should not come below, I would force the companion door, and claim his protection.

But I was not put to this alternative. As soon as he arrived, I heard him desire the hatches to be taken off, and order his men to examine the hold. The inspection did not satisfy him, for he hailed the sloop, and reported that there were Spanish goods on board which did not appear in the manifest.

"Then remain on board, and keep your stern lights burning all night, and take charge of the ship," was the reply.

In a state of irksome suspense we remained nearly two hours, expecting every minute to hear the officer descending. At length, to our relief, the companion doors were unlocked, and a young man, attended by our captain, entered the cabin. He looked surprised on seeing us, and, bowing to Isabella, apologized for intruding at such an unreasonable hour. "But I was not given to understand," he added, "that there were passengers in the ship—prisoners, I should rather pronounce it, Mr. Marbone, for you seem to have had them under lock and key, which is rather an unusual mode of treating ladies, at least. No wine, sir," he continued,

motioning away the bottles which the captain was hastily placing on the table, "no wine; but be pleased to show me your register and bill of lading."

He had not been long seated to inspect them, when a shuffling and hurried sound of feet was heard overhead, and a voice calling on Mr. Grant for assistance, showed that some scuffle had taken place above. Instantaneously we all started to our feet, and the lieutenant was in the act of drawing his sword, when, looking round, I observed Marbone presenting a pistol behind. With a cry of warning I threw myself forward, and had just time to strike the weapon slightly aside, when it went off; the ball narrowly missed the head of Grant, for whom it had been aimed, but struck the priest immediately over the right eye,—who, making one desperate and convulsive leap as high as the ceiling, sank down dead; and before the captain could pull out another I discharged the contents of mine into his breast.

We then rushed upon deck, but it was only to find the boat's crew had been mastered, and to behold the last of the men tumbled overboard. The pirates then dispersed, and exerted themselves to get the ship speedily under way; while the boatswain sang out to extinguish the lanterns, that the *Tartar* might not be guided by the lights.

"It is all over with us," exclaimed the captain, "but follow me—we have one chance for our lives yet. Our boat is still towing astern; do you throw yourself over and swim till I slide down the painter and cut her adrift; come, bear a hand and jump! Don't you see them hastening aft?"

And in an instant he pitched himself off the taffrail, slid down the rope which held the boat, and cast her loose.

But this advice, however judicious, it was impossible for me to follow, for at that moment repeated shrieks from Isabella put to flight all thoughts for my own individual safety. I therefore hurried back to the cabin, determined that if I could not save her along with myself, I would remain and protect her with my life; and in a happy time I arrived.

The candles were still burning on the table; and, through the smoke of the pistols, which still filled the cabin, I beheld her struggling in the arms of a negro, the identical slave who had displayed such insolence in the early part of the evening. With

one stroke of the butt-end of my pistol, I fractured the cursed villain's skull, caught up Isabella in my arms, ran up the ladder and had nearly gained the side, when the boatswain, attracted by her white garments, left the helm to interrupt me; and I saw the gleam of his uplifted cutlass on the point of descending, when he was suddenly struck down by some person from behind. I did not stop to discover who had done me this good office, but hailing Grant, and clasping Isabella firmly to my heart, I plunged into the water, followed by my unknown ally. Aided by my companion, whom I found to be John Wyllie, the mate, we easily managed to support our charge till the boat reached us, when we found that the greater part of the men had been rescued in a similar manner.

When the morning dawned we perceived the *Dart* like a spect on the horizon, and the sloop of war in close chase.

By an observation taken the day before on board of the *Tartar*, Mr. Grant informed us we were to the north-east of the Bahamas, and distant about 170 miles from Welling's Island, which was the nearest land. This was a long distance, but as despair never enters the breast of a British sailor, even in situations of the utmost extremity, we cheered up each other, and, as no other resource was left us, we manned our oars and pulled away with life, trusting to the chance of meeting with some vessel, of which there was a strong probability, as this was the common course of the leeward traders.

And our hopes were not disappointed, for next day we fortunately fell in with a brig from the Azores, bound for Porto Rico, on board of which we were received with much kindness, and in five days we found ourselves moored in Porto Rico harbour.

My first step on landing was to enquire for a boarding-house for Isabella, and I had the good luck to be directed to one kept by a respectable Scotch family, in Orange Terrace; and to this I conducted her. My next transaction was to charter a small cutter, and to communicate to Grant the secret of the hidden treasure, at the same time asking him to adventure himself and his men on its recovery.

Without hesitation the lieutenant at once agreed to

accompany me, and engaging some hands out of a vessel newly arrived, we soon mustered a party of fourteen men.

Our cutter proved a prime sailer, and though the winds were light and variable, by the aid of our sweeps we made the roads on the evening of the sixth day. As the Spaniard had foretold, the moon was climbing the western sky, and pouring the fulness of her splendour with a mild and beautiful effulgence on the untroubled deep, as we slowly drifted with the current between the Wolf-rock and the adjacent isle.

We ran the cutter into a deep and narrow creek, moored her safe, and proceeded well around to the eastern extremity. There we found the projecting point of land and the old vanilla tree exactly in the situation described. Its huge twisted trunk was still entire; and from the end of its solitary branch, which was graced by a few scattered leaves, the body of a man in the garb of a sailor hung suspended in irons.

The clothes had preserved the body from the birds of prey, but the head was picked clean and bare, leaving the eyeless and blanched scull to glitter white in the moonlight.

In perfect silence, and with something of awe on our spirits, impressed by the solitude and dreariness of the scene, we seated ourselves on the rock, and with my timepiece in my hand I began to mark the progress of the shadow.

For nearly three hours we watched in this manner, listening attentively to the slightest sound from seaward; but everything continued hushed and still, except the creaking of the chain as the dead man swung to and fro in the breeze.

Midnight was now drawing near; the moon, radiant and full, was careering, high through the deep blue of heaven, and the shadows of the branch and stem were approaching each other, and towards the desired point.

At length the hand of my timepiece pointed to within one minute of the time.

It passed over.

The branch and stem now merged into one and threw their shadow due east; and the first spadeful of earth had been thrown out, when the man who had been thrown out, when the man who had been stationed to keep a look out came running to inform us that a boat was rapidly approaching

from the east. We immediately concluded that they must be part of the *Dart's* crew; and their long and vigorous strokes, as they stretched out to the full extent of their oars, showed that they knew the importance of every minute that elapsed. Our implements for digging were hastily laid aside, and we concealed ourselves among the rocks until they should come within reach.

In a short time the boat was seen ashore, and eight armed men came forward, partly Spaniards and partly the ship's crew, among whom I recognized the boatswain, and, to my surprise, Marbone, whom I had shot and left for dead in the cabin.

Without giving them time to prepare for the assault, we quitted our shelter and sprang among them at once, laying about with our cutlasses. For a little time the contest was toughly and hotly contested; for the pirates were resolute and reckless, and fought with the desperation of men who knew the only chance for their lives lay in their own exertion. In the confusion of the fray I had lost sight of Grant, and was closely engaged with one of the Spaniards, when the voice of the boatswain shouting forth a horrid imprecation sounded immediately behind me. I turned round and sprang aside from the sweep of his cutlass, and, as my pistols were both empty, retreated, acting on the defensive, when he pulled out his, fired, and hurled the weapon at my head. The shot passed without injuring me; but the pistol, aimed with better effect, struck me full on the forehead. A thousand sparks of light flashed from my eyes. I felt myself reeling, and on the point of falling, when a cut across the shoulders stretched me at once on the ground. When I recovered from my stupor, and opened my eyes, the morning was far advanced—the sun was shining brightly overhead; and I found myself at sea, lying on the deck of the cutter, and Grant busily engaged in examining my wounds. From time to time I learned that the pirates had been mastered, after a severe conflict, in which four had been slain and left on the field; two had escaped unobserved during the fight, and made off with their boat; and two had been vanquished and made prisoners on board, one of whom was Marbone. On our arrival at Porto Rico we delivered them over to the civil power; and, soon afterwards,

Marbone was tried for the murder of the priest, when he was convicted and executed.

Under good nursing and care I gradually recovered, and, by the fall of the season, without any further adventures, I once more landed safe in Scotland.

Isabella is not now that destitute and unprotected orphan whom I first saw in the middle of the Western Ocean, but the happy mistress of a happy home, diffusing life and gladness on all around her. My friend Grant has lately been placed on the list of post captains, and is anxiously waiting for more bustling times, when there will be more knocking about, and more hard blows got, than what our present peace establishment admits of. John Wyllie, too, has had advancement in his line, being now master of one of the finest ships from the Clyde.

CHAPTER VII.

“A light on the lee-bow!”

This cry from the look out on the fore-castle put a sudden stop to the Christmas festivities in the cabin of the *Walrus*, and sent all hands tumbling on deck.

A light in such far south latitudes as they then were, was quite an unexpected circumstance; and as there was certainly no known land in those regions, it must be a ship's light.

“It may be the lost ship,” said the captain to Frank Royston, as they gazed out to the south, where a blueish light was to be discerned—pale, but clear and distinct.

“Or a star!” replied the mate.

“Too close to the horizon for a star!” remarked the captain; “it's a ship's light—it must be a ship's light. Even if there were land down there, it's dead certain there's no light-house.”

The fog was now rapidly clearing off, and the open sea could be seen to the north for miles.

To the southward, however, the fog still hung about in patches, and it was through one of the many gaps in this mist that the pale blue light was seen.

"Loose the foretopsail and foresail, run up the foretopmast stay-sail, and jib!" cried Captain Scott, after gazing long and hard at the mysterious light.

"You mean to run down south among the loose ice before daylight then?" asked the mate.

"Yes; there's a good moon, the fog is clearing off, and it's my firm belief that's a ship's light. If I'm right, where one ship can float safely, another may, and I've got an idea that this is the lost ship. It's midsummer down here, and she may have been working up north this month or more since the ice broke up."

While this conversation was going on, sail was made on the brig, and her head put to the north, where still the pale blue light could be seen.

In a very few minutes she was among loose ice, through which she forced her way, a continuous crashing noise at the bows accompanying her progress.

"There's a deal of drift ere about?" remarked the mate to the captain, "and it seems to get more instead of clearing off!"

"It's all loose ice, and the fog's drifting right away; there's a good moon, and so long as there's no pack ice we're pretty safe," was the reply.

The *Walrus* was now making way, at the rate of almost three knots an hour, though but for the loose ice she would have been going twice that pace.

For more than an hour the *Walrus* bored ahead towards the light to the northward; but though Captain Scott and his mate both kept a vigilant look out, anxiously wishing for some change in the appearance of the mysterious light, it did not appear to get any closer.

Bob Garnet, the boatswain, was in a measure a privileged person, by reason of his great experience among the icy seas around the North Pole.

He was standing by the captain and mate on the fore-castle, and all at once broke out

"That's no light—it's nout but the glimmer of the moon-shine on a berg of clear ice, reckon we'd better heave to till daylight, Cap'n Scott. We shall be among pack ice before long, by the look of it."

These words of the old boatswain came like a thunderclap on the captain and mate.

Under the impression that the light was beyond all question that of a ship, they had been running the brig south, till she was now almost hemmed in by drift ice, which each fathom she proceeded grew denser, and now showed signs of freezing up completely.

The wind was still from the north, and comparatively warm. It was, however, obviously impossible to tack, which, by reason of the great obstacle, the mass of ice around her bows, prevented her coming up to the wind.

Neither was it possible to near ship, for as she came up to the wind, the same cause prevented her coming right round. Under these circumstances, the most that could be done was to heave her to on the port tack, with her head to the east.

It was now midsummer in those regions, and the nights were very short. Shortly after two o'clock it was broad daylight, and the fog gradually clearing off, an extraordinary scene was revealed to the crew of the *Walrus*.

An hour before daylight, loud and terrible noises had alarmed the less experienced of the crew.

Bob Garnet, however, though he looked grave and anxious, was at no loss to explain the cause of the sounds. A continuous crashing and groaning noise, interspersed with sharp reports, at times as loud as those of a cannon, would best describe the nature of the sounds.

It was not, however, till broad daylight, that the real position of the brig could be made out, and when it was so proved, by no means reassuring.

Ice to the south—with huge icebergs at intervals in the far distance.

Ice also to the east and the west, not loose drift ice, but dense packs—grinding and crashing together in perpetual fury.

Ice also to the north as far as the eye could reach. A brief survey of the situation was enough to tell the adventurous voyagers that at present it was hopeless to attempt getting through the dense field to the northward.

How it came there seemed at first an utter mystery, but Bob Garnet was ready with an explanation. The northern

THE LOST SHIP.

ice field had not come up from the south, but had been drifted to its present position by a powerful current, either from the east or the west.

Meanwhile, the situation of the brig was critical in the extreme. The southern field was being drifted northwards by a current, while the northern field was kept stationary by the north wind, which still blew a fresh breeze.

Between these two ice fields there was imminent danger of her getting a bad "nip"—as it is called—which "nips," with such fields of ice would have the effect of crushing the strong sides of that vessel like an empty egg shell.

One brig lay in a sort of indentation, or bay, in the southern field, and as the vast mass of ice was pressed northward by the current, the edges of this ice-bay, to the east and to the west were forced in contact with the southern field.

Hence this grinding and crushing noise, which momentarily increased in violence.

The scene, too, as the fog cleared off, and the summer antarctic sun threw his brightest white rays over the broad expanse of frozen ice, was grand in the extreme. Where the ice of the two fields came in contact it was piled up many feet high on either field, by that steady, slow, but resistless pressure.

It is evident that the southern field was slowly pushing its way north, smashing up and disintegrating the northern flow before its steady progress.

The wind from the north constantly caused the brig to drift further into the ice bay, and towards the margin of the southern field, and the current from the south as constantly floated the latter towards the northern field.

Under these combined influences the ice bay grew momentarily smaller as the edges were ground down and crushed with loud crashing, roaring, and thundering reports.

Each moment the position of the brig grew more critical, and though there was no reason as regards working the brig why our artists should not go below and turn in, every man of the crew remained on deck.

The ice to the south was now distant about half a mile, and the great ice giants were obviously approaching.

The edge of the northern field was now not more than three hundred yards away, and the vessel was already surrounded by drift ice, fragments from the grinding and constant collision of the two fields. At the present rate of drifts it seemed certain that the two ice-fields must be in absolute contact in every part in about half an hour more.

And a glance to the east and west, where the great masses ground against each other, piling up huge blocks of ice high enough to utterly bury the brig, seemed to give no hope of escape if once the unlucky *Walrus* should be caught in the nip.

"I don't see how we're going to get out of this scrape," said Frank Royston, the mate; "the two flows are bound to come together, and if we can't get away the brig must be smashed up. If she were of solid cast iron, she could scarce help being squeezed out of all shape by such tremendous pressure.

"Bob Garnet," said gloomily, "You're right mister mate; there don't seem much chance of getting out of this, and what's more we don't deserve to, for we'd never any business to be in such a fix. But if people will run their vessels on a foggy night in chase of a Jack o' Lantern ice glimmer for a ship's light, they must expect to get into trouble."

This was a hard hit at the captain, and he felt it.

Over sanguine, he had persuaded himself that it was a ship's light he saw. Indeed, there was some excuse for him, as even Bob Garnet was for a time deceived, so perfect was the illusion.

The difference was, that the old Arctic cruiser would have waited for daylight to make certain as to whether there was, indeed, a vessel to the northward.

He had seen too much of ice-phenomena to be willing to trust to the evidence of his senses by night among the ice-bergs.

The two ice fields continued to approach until the open water in which the schooner lay was reduced to the smallest limits.

What had been a large ice bay was now a mere pond, each moment getting smaller. The ice to leeward was now distant only about two hundred yards, while the northern field was

quite close to the side of the brig. Indeed, great floating fragments, several yards square, were already in contact with her timbers, and threatened to hem her in completely.

A sharp exclamation from Bob Garnet drew the attention of the captain and mate.

All hands, including the old sailor, had gathered on the forepart of the deck and forecastle, and were watching with gloomy countenances the slow, but sure approach of the two ice fields.

Bob Garnet hastily moving up the fore shrouds a short way, shaded his eyes with his hand, and gazed eagerly out to the south.

All waited in breathless anxiety to hear the result of his scrutiny, for his manner showed that he had discovered something which might have an important bearing on their fate.

The interval before he spoke seemed minutes, though it was only seconds.

"Clear water to leeward," he cried, during the pause in the terrible crashing and grinding of the ice. "Clear water by all that's joyful."

Tom Scott at once mounted the ratlines, and, standing beside the old sailor, looked out to the south. And there sure enough over a narrow isthmus of ice, was open sea, among which the icebergs floated, tossing and swaying majestically about like huge castles rocked by an earthquake.

Could the vessel be but taken into this comparatively open water there would be at least a chance of safety; not that the prospects of our adventurers would even then be by any means cheering; but there would be a hope, by skilful management, of steering her safely through the narrow channels between the army of enormous bergs.

The young captain, sweeping the southern field with a rapid and keen glance in search of a passage or channel, descried one spot where the ice did not appear so close and compact—indeed it appeared to be little more than drift, or loose ice, and noting this, a daring, almost desperate, plan suggested itself to Scott. The ice isthmus at this, the narrowest point, was between a quarter and half a mile across. There was no passage of clear water; but the thought occurred to the captain, that if it were loose ice all across at that particular place, it might be possible to force the brig through.

The wind blew pretty stiff from the north, so that in running through the loose ice she would be going almost dead before the wind, and would require but little guidance by means of the rudder, as she could be kept straight by trimming the sails. The idea of attempting to run a vessel through more than a quarter of a mile of floating ice, with the greatest probability of meeting a solid part, was certainly an audacious one.

But desperate diseases require desperate remedies; and in the present case the only hope of our Atlantic voyagers seemed to be in breaking through the icy barrier of the thinnest part, and so reaching the clear water to the south.

"Loose the foretopsail, a couple of you!" shouted the captain, Tom Scott, "run up the jib."

Two seamen sprang aloft to loose the canvass, while another cast away the jib.

Bob Garnet stood by the jib downhaul to clear it away when the sail was hoisted. The mate and captain were also on the forecastle, and the old salt availed himself of a certain amount of privilege allowed him by his officers, and spoke out, "I s'pose you're agoing to run her afore the wind, Captain Scott, and try and bust through the ice into open sea?"

"It seems to be our only chance, Bob," replied the skipper.

"It's a desperate, dangerous venture, cap'n, seems to me." Bob Garnet went on; "that there's pack-ice in the middle, and that broken drift is only on the edges. If the schooner runs full bolt agin solid thick ice, its a wonder if sho don't stave her bars slap in."

Captain Scott followed the direction of the old sailor's gaze, and his heart misgave him at the prospect.

On the edge of this southern ice-field, and particularly at this narrow part, where they hoped to force a passage, there was a great quantity of loose ice in cakes, from a few inches to a yard or two in diameter.

Through this it might fairly be hoped that the brig might succeed in making her way. This loose ice was in continual motion, agitated, and tossed about by the waves.

But beyond this there was a considerable stretch of ice,

which looked firm and solid, and in which little or no motion could be discerned, and the great probability was that this consisted of a solid mass, a component part of the field. Beyond this expanse of apparently firm pack-ice, there could be seen loose ice tossed about as that nearest the brig. Could this once be reached, then safety, or at all events, deliverance from the immediate peril might be expected.

The young commander, as he looked, hesitated, as well he might, on the eve of making an attempt apparently so desperate. But at this moment the crashing and grinding of the opposing ice-field increased in violence, and with deafening reports, like artillery, large masses were piled up in wild confusion.

The space of open water in which the vessel floated grew momentarily smaller. A great piece of ice, of immense size broken off by the shock of the collision, was drifting towards the brig, and it was obvious that in a few moments, if no way of escape offered, she must be completely crushed.

The fog, too, which had cleared away, now again came driving from the northward, and giving the prospect of a fresh source of danger. Under these circumstances Captain Scott gave the orders which would cause the vessel to pay off from the wind, and head direct for the southern ice field.

“Hoist the jib; sheet home the fore topsail.”

The jib was hoisted, and the sheet hauled down the fore topsail to set, and the yard trimmed.

The men walked in dead silence—no song, no “yeo heave ho”—for all were fully aware of the desperate peril in which they stood. Two men went to the wheel; the rest of the crew grouped together on the fore part of the deck, anxious, silent, but ready to do their utmost for dear life.

The captain, mate, and Bob Garnet stood on the fore-castle. As the vessel swung round in obedience to the pressure of the wind on the head sails. Tom Scott, anxiously looking ahead, shouted his orders to the helmsman.

A fresh breeze was blowing, and as the vessel went off before the wind she rapidly gathered way, and in the space of a minute was flying along away from one danger—the northern ice field—as it seemed only to dash herself to pieces against that one to the south.

For a moment or so the speed of the brig increased as she gathered way ; but, as she approached the icy barrier, loose masses of small floating ice accumulated about her bows so as to hinder her progress perceptibly.

Still, however, the little Walrus struggled on—the grinding and thumping at her bows telling a tale of the resistance she met with. All hands were now eagerly looking ahead. The vessel was now completely surrounded by loose ice, which hemmed her in on every side. The strong northerly wind, however, drove her ahead at the rate of four or five knots, and she was soon right among the ice field.

To have turned now was impossible. The rudder was useless to avoid its being injured, the helm was lashed amidships, and the brig drove on before the wind, steered only by means of the head yards, which were trimmed accordingly, and the jib.

If Captain Scott had been somewhat rash in allowing his ship to be in such a predicament, he showed great skill, coolness, and courage in navigating her.

Standing on the heel of the bowsprit, he gave his orders for the bracing of the fore yards on the port and starboard tack accordingly as he wished her to veer to the east or west. Fathom by fathom the Walrus bored her way through the cleft ice, not without many a bump and a continuous grinding crashing at her bows, which seemed to threaten the integrity of her planks and timbers, strong as she was.

The young captain winced at each shock, harder than common, as though he in person felt the damage which the ice was probably wreaking on the bows of his vessel.

Fathom by fathom she progressed, but moment by moment her progress became slower as the ice ahead grew stronger and more compact. As it happened, however, the wind now freshened considerably, and, though with many a groan and much grinding and thumping, the Walrus forged ahead.

No voice was heard save that of the captain, as he shouted :
“Starboard fore braces—brace up the head yards on the port tack. Port fore braces, square the fore yard,” as the ease might be.

In obedience to this trimming of the sails the ship would swerve, its course would be altered, and thus Captain Scott

was enabled to avoid several large lumps of solid ice—miniature ice floes indeed—and continue his onward progress.

All possible means had been taken to protect the vessel's bows from injury by hanging over fenders and so forth; but, nevertheless, Tom Scott could not but be seriously disquieted at the continual grinding and occasional heavy shocks.

The brig was now approaching the strip of ice which separated her from the open sea to the northward. Bob Garnett had mounted half-way up the fore shrouds in order to command a better view.

"Solid ice right ahead!" he cried all at once, to the dismay of the captain, officers, and men.

The skipper himself ran up the shrouds to verify with his own eyes the bad news.

It was too true!

A solid strip of thick pack ice, covered with hummocks and inequalities, could be plainly seen right ahead.

The fact that there was but little motion in this strip of about two hundred yards, across which the ice at the edges was in furious agitation, was sufficient to convince all who gazed that it was indeed a solid isthmus firmly attached to the great field. It would appear that the current at this place was stronger than elsewhere, because of the great agitation of the waves, which is always the case when wind and tide are antagonistic.

It was this constant and violent agitation, of the sea, making the loose ice toss and tumble about, which caused the ice field to be worn away all along where the current was strongest, thus forming the narrow isthmus.

In time, perhaps, the whole of this isthmus might be worn away, but it must obviously be the work of days, and if the brig could not gain the open sea at once it seemed certain that she must be crushed by the tremendous forces by which she is surrounded.

After a rapid glance at the state of affairs, the young captain and the old sailor hastened down on deck.

The former thought he saw a chance of escape, or, at all events a prospect of staying off immediate disaster, and proceeded to act vigorously, and with promptitude.

The jib was hauled down, the foresail nailed up, and the fore and foretopsail, and foreyard braced sharp up, so that the wind had but little influence on the sails. Then, at the risk of damage to the rudder the wheel was cast adrift, and the helm put to starboard.

At the same time the maintopsail and trysail were so manipulated as to catch the full force of the wind, and so bring the vessel up on the larboard tack.

This was a work of great difficulty, by reason of the opposition offered by the ice, and, in spite of every effort, she could not be brought nearer than nine points of the wind; that is to say, it blew one point abaft the beam. The brig was now heading nearly due east, the wind blowing north by west.

Just a head was a promontory of ice, beyond which was a smaller ice bay full of drifts, and from which (if they could reach there) might be a chance of finding an opening in the isthmus, or out a place where the ice was weak, and the strips dividing them from the open sea much more narrow.

At the extremity of this ice promontory, which they hoped to weather, was a hummock, a large mound of ice standing boldly up like the bluff headland of a land bay. This had originally been formed by masses of ice piled one on another, though the frequent and violent collisions of floating ice, snow, and frozen fog, had accumulated on it until it assumed the proportions of a small iceberg.

In height it was about level with the main top of the brig, behind it, as presenting on its sea face, a perpendicular wall of ice.

In the rear, however, it sloped down gradually to the flat ice, across which could be seen the loose agitated mass, into which haven of safety, comparatively speaking, Captain Scott wished to take the brig. The prospect was now gloomy indeed.

The brig headed to the east, the wind a little to the west of north.

All along her lee was a line of hard pack ice, several feet thick, outside which tumbled and tossed perpetually the shift ice—loose pieces of all sizes.

Nowhere around the brig was there any clear water; she was completely hemmed in by this ice sea, and a few fathoms only

to leeward was a coast of ice, against which, should she be dashed, the result would be as fatal as the ruggedest rocks.

True, there were no breakers thundering on the shore; but she would as surely be destroyed in a short time were she to drift broadside on this icy barrier, as if waves mountain high dashed on an iron bound coast.

"She can't do it," remarked Bob Garnet, sententiously; "taint in natur', leastwise in sailing ship natur'; if she was a steamer forty thousand horse-power, she might go dead to windward, get clear, and round the point yonder. As it is she'll be ashore before the moon's half an hour higher."

Gloomy words, but words which partook too much of truth to be controverted by either captain or mate.

The brig plunged ahead under the influence of this brisk gale, making a prodigious crashing among the ice, into which her bows surged at every heave. To judge by the noise she ought to have been going at least ten knots, whereas, in truth, she was scarce doing three.

And the lee way she made was something terrible. So much so, that when Bob Garnet touched the captain on the arm, and with the simple words, "Look there sir, look at her wake," pointed astern, Tom Scott's heart sank within him.

He gave one despairing glance ahead at the ice headland, and then to the mate, said: "There's no hope, Royston, she must go out to the ice."

"Then if she must," replied the mate, "let her go stern on. If she goes broadside she'll be knocked to pieces in no time, while there is a chance, if she runs her strong bows on to the ice, that she may make a sort of a dock for herself."

"Aye," said Bob Garnet, "a pretty dock, a grave you mean, Mr. Mate."

"Well, so be it, if it must," replied the captain; "what is to be will be; if it's the will of Providence we're to perish here, perish we shall—that's a dead certainty. Nevertheless, we will do all we can. In my judgment, Mr. Royston's right, what say you Garnet? Shall I square the mainyard, flatten in the jib-sheet, and run her dead on to the ice?"

The old salt made no answer for a time; but looked aloft at the sails, then to windward, then at the high point of solid ice ahead.

"He's keeping her a 'reef full' with a vengeance," said Royston, the mate; "why she might lie a point nearer the wind. 'full and by!'" he shouted instinctively.

For the benefit of nautical readers, we will explain that "full and by," when given to the helmsman as a direction, means that he is to steer the vessel that she shall head as near the wind, or by the wind, as possible, and yet that all the sails shall be "full."

"The man's a lubber, ean't steer a bit," said Captain Scott, who was very particular on this point; "however, it doesn't matter, I shall keep her off now, and run her stern on to the ice. 'Square main-yard, flatten in the jib-sheet, hard up your helm.'"

The men, with that innate confidence sailors always have in their officers, ran to obey, thinking, perhaps, that the captain had discovered some way of escape.

The helmsman proceeded to turn the wheel round in order to put the helm hard up, no easy task by reason of the loose ice which impeded the free working of the rudder. Scarcely, however, had he heaved a dozen spokes when a shout was heard (it might have been heard a quarter of a mile, despite the perpetual din of crashing and grinding ice).

"Hold hard—down with your helm—keep her up to the wind—let go the jib—haul yards—haul down the jib."

The voice was not that of either the captain or mate, and yet the order was instantly obeyed.

It was Bob Garnett, who at that critical moment took upon himself to countermand the orders of his captain.

Instantly succeeding his words there was a renewed and greater uproar among the ice fields—the northern and southern floe crashing together with great fury.

Bob Garnett's words were heard; but for fully a minute afterwards no other sound save the rending and terrible crashing of the ice could be distinguished. Meanwhile the man at the wheel, in obedience to the last command, had put the helm down, and the sea just at this place being rather more free from ice, her head came up to the wind.

"What's the meaning of this, Garnet?" cried the young captain, when the din of ice in collision had somewhat subsided. "Why do you countermand my orders?"

"Look at the ship's head, Captain Scott—then see where the wind's coming from—that's my answer."

Captain Scott gazed, started, and gave an exclamation of surprise.

The vessel headed fully a point to windward of the point of ice, and was still coming up to the wind under the influence of the helm hard a lee, and yet the sails were all full.

A second glance told the young commander that the wind itself had shifted about five points to the westward, and now blew from west-nor-west. This enabled the vessel to be steered well to windward of the dangerous promontory, and when this was about two points on the lee bow Tom Scott, who now fully understood the state of affairs, called:

"Steady—so—keep her so."

Round went the wheel; and in half a minute the brig was slowly pursuing her way through the ice, in a north-easterly direction.

Once more our imperilled navigators breathed freely. If they had not attained safety, at all events they got a respite from immediate death.

The progress of the *Walrus* in that ice encumbered—ice-locked sea—was necessarily slow and tedious; but in the space of ten minutes, she passed to windward of this great hummock at this end of the ice promontory and a semi-circular bay or deep indentation in the solid floe, lay open to her.

Here the ice was much smaller, and consequently there would be less danger of the brig's hull being injured, so without hesitation Captain Scott ordered the helm to be put up, the main topsail shivered, and ran her slowly into the ice cove then he again brought her head to the wind, and tacking the main topsail, the *Walrus* lay, for the present moment, safe, but utterly hemmed in and embayed by ice.

No more could possibly be done, as there was nothing approaching to a channel in the floe to leeward—no present chance, however faint, of forcing a passage through to the open sea.

Under the circumstances, all that could be done was to lay to and keep a vigilant look out for any opportunity of escape or opening in the ice, or anything which gave the faintest

promise of being a navigable channel. Night had now given place to day, and were there any possible opening, everything was in favour.

The wind now fell light, and the crushing and grinding of the ice fields moderated.

It seemed as though the two opposing waves had concluded a truce, and mutually resolved on forbearance for a season.

But though the air was no longer made hideous by the loud crashing and grinding of the ice fields together, they slowly but steadily pressed on ; and as the ice at the edges of the most prominent parts was ground away, the bays or indentations, in one of which the *Walrus* was lying, were by degrees made smaller and smaller until it was obvious that they would soon be obliterated altogether.

The crew of the brig, though fatigued, were in no mood for sleep. The danger was too present and imminent to permit of such a thing, and all hands remained on deck, clustered in and around the cook's galley for warmth. The ice fields were now in contact in almost every part, except the little bay or cove where the brig lay.

As the day wore on and night approached, a westerly wind sprung up, which soon swelled to a gale, with squalls of snow and hail.

Shortly after sun-down it blew hard, and the effect of the storm began to be dangerously apparent on the ice-laden sea.

The two great fields were now in close contact in every place except this indentation where lay the *Walrus*.

This had now been more than half obliterated, and each minute took away from the small remaining space of comparatively clear water in which the brig floated.

It was a grand and terrible sight, and the crew of the *Walrus*, after a good supper of hot coffee and potatoe-scorns mustered on the weather side of the deck, and watched, not without one and serious thought of their own fate, the terrific battle between the two great ice fields.

The southern one was the greatest in extent, reaching as far as the eye could see to the east and to the west.

But the northern floe, though not stretching so far longitudinally was much deeper, and probably contained the greatest mass of ice.

That to the south was acted upon by a current, while the other was borne southwards by the force of the gale and the waves, from which the other was sheltered.

The force which pressed the two fields against one another seemed to act at intervals, and not regularly, as though there was a continual grinding of the ice. It was only in about a quarter of an hour that a grand crash came; then the two bergs would close up; there would be a grinding and groaning for some seconds, and then the two edges would be forced up to a height of twenty feet or more, falling back on the ice, and forming hummocks of various sizes and shapes.

This was repeated again and again; a loud report and crash telling every ten minutes or so of the steady approach between solid ice and the brig.

Towards midnight several great pieces of ice, broken off from the main body, were forced into the little bay where lay the ice-bound brig, and coming in contact with her weather side, forced her towards the southern floe.

Fenders were got over the side, and every possible precaution taken to preserve her from injury, but nothing could be done to keep her off from the solid field of ice to the south, towards which she was slowly drifted, until, shortly after midnight, she was jammed broadside on against solid ice, more than eight feet thick.

Some large pieces, several of them twenty yards across and more, were on her weather side, and kept her close to the pack-ice. Minute by minute fresh pieces, some of them miniature floes, indeed, were broken off from the ice fields, and drifted down to the little ice bay, of which only a few square fathoms now remained.

Shortly after midnight it seemed that either the current ceased to drift the south field north, or that the gale and sea had greater power, for this floe was pressed on with resistless fury.

At two bells—an hour after midnight—a tremendous report followed by a great splash and furious agitation of the sea startled all hands and brought the watch below,—who, tired out, had gone to snatch a little rest—running on deck. The cause was soon apparent. The hummock, or great ice-rock at the extremity of the water in the point of the bay

had been detached by the pressure of hundreds of thousands of tons, which came surging down from the north and breaking into several fragments, had fallen headlong into the comparatively clear water, causing violent waves and agitation of the loose ice. Then this whole point gave way before the northern floe, broke off and came driving down on the brig—now apparently doomed. At two bells, this great mass of ice, with the fragments of the hummock, which were floating about, got to close quarters. The great pieces around this vessel were smashed into little bits, and these in turn forced up till they reached the brig's bulwarks. Then there was terrible creaking, and groaning, and cracking and all gave themselves up for lost.

All at once the vessel, with a loud grinding noise, was lifted bodily up with a jerk, and left high and dry in about ten feet of ice, heaving over on to her starboard broadside.

Everything loose was sent flying; not a man could keep his footing, and the maintop gallant-mast went by the board.

Still, not satisfied with the havoc it had made, the ruthless ice-field pressed on, and as the gale roared with increased fury, the havoc, uproar, and crashing together of the ice became each moment more terrible.

Huge masses were forced higher and higher, till they towered above the main top of the brig, to fall on the field with a terrific noise. Each moment this ice battle approached nearer until huge lumps began to fall all around the brig.

It seemed certain that in a few minutes she must be crushed, and the men were just about to scramble out of her on to the ice, in order to avoid being instantly overwhelmed, which seemed imminent, when another startling event occurred.

The narrow strip of ice in the northern field, through which Captain Scott had hoped to force a passage, suddenly gave way to the tremendous pressure. It parted in two in the middle, close to the brig, shivering up into innumerable fragments. The little vessel rested on one of these fragments for a moment or two, which then broke up into still smaller pieces, and, settling gradually down, she was once more afloat.

Her sails catching the wind, she was drifted rapidly south-

ward, amidst a scene of the most awful grandeur. The two ice-fields seemed to have gone mad: the northern one, urged on by the gale and the sea, precipitating itself furiously on the others with terrible crashings, rendings, and roarings.

The brig, as she drifted away, was in great part protected from the sea by the masses of ice to windward. In the space of half an hour she had drifted to the open sea, and as day dawned in the east, was once more fairly afloat and clear of ice.

CHAPTER VIII.

ONCE MORE IN THE OPEN SEA.

OUR voyagers could scarce believe in their good fortune for a minute or two, so desperate had been their peril, so apparently hopeless all chance of escape.

"The Lord in his mercy be praised," ejaculated Bob Garnet, "and may He see us through all our troubles as He has through this one."

"Amen!" said Captain Scott.

And then, with sound practical sense, he turned all his thoughts to navigate the vessel safely, remembering the old proverb of the wayfarer, who, his vehicle being stuck in the mud prayed to Jupiter to aid him, and was advised also to "Put his shoulders to the wheel."

"Sound the well!" he cried, as soon as he was satisfied the brig was absolutely clear of the ice. "Starboard watch, man the pumps! Port watch, stand by the hands! Square the main yards!"

The brig had shifted out of the ice broadside on, and as the jib and fore-topsails had been again set she rapidly paid off before the wind.

The Captain and the mate, and indeed all who took the trouble to think on the matter, felt sure that she could not have passed through such an ordeal—such crushing and squeezing—to say nothing of the battering her bows had previously received—without being a good deal damaged.

There was little surprise when the carpenter announced that there were three feet of water in the hold.

The sun rose red and angry, and with his appearance there came rolling from the south a thick fog, which shortly over-shadowed the vessel.

So dense was it that it was impossible to see a cable's length in any direction.

Under these circumstances it became imperative to heave the vessel to, as there was an army of icebergs to leeward, and probably might be floating packs about.

All that day the fog lasted, clearing up at times in patches for a few minutes only, again to roll down on the sea, and enveloping all in its sombre yellow embrace.

The wind fell light, and towards night it was nearly a dead calm.

Then there sprung up a breeze from the southward, piercing cold, laden with the frosts of the regions about the south pole, whence it had come.

Fearing to be drifted back to the field of ice from which they had so fortunately escaped, the young commander of the *Walrus* at once made sail on her in order to keep an offing.

Under the two topsail jibs, mainsail and foresail, he made short tacks of about a mile in each direction, so as to clear up to windward in case it should come on to blow.

He had experienced quite enough of the ice fields the brig had so fortunately escaped from, and had not the slightest intention of renewing his acquaintance with them.

These short tacks were harassing tasks for the crew, but they were good men; all had confidence in their officers, and, besides, the desperate peril they had just escaped from was fresh in their recollection; so though one watch was kept almost constantly at the pumps, and the others were as constantly employed in tacking ship, not a grumble or a murmur was heard.

The reason for these short tacks, involving almost constant work in hauling round the yards, &c., was apparent.

To run any considerable distance amidst such a dense fog in those ice encumbered seas, would have been rash in the extreme.

A drifting floe, or even an iceberg might come

across the track, and a collision at any considerable speed must be certain destruction to the vessel and all on board. So amidst the fogs of the Antarctic seas the *Walrus* dodged backwards and forwards a fleet of icebergs to windward, and no less dangerous back ice on her lee.

Even as it was, with a bright look out and tacking every ten minutes, there was considerable danger, and the "ice lead" was in constant use.

Of course were there was no soundings, as in the open ocean, the lead is useless. But the ice lead, as it is called, is a different affair altogether.

It is used to give accuracy of the proximity of icebergs, or any great quantity of ice.

It is simply a thermometer. A bucket of water was drawn every five minutes by one man and its temperature tested.

Should there be any great fall of the mercury it is almost a certain sign that an iceberg is close at hand, and, profiting by the warning, the prudent mariner immediately either tacks or heaves her to, by laying the mainyard aback.

Fogs are very prevalent in those high northern latitudes, as is also the case indeed in the northern polar regions, and add greatly to the perils of navigators.

For two days and nights the fog lasted, clearing away now and again for a minute or so, only to sweep down again and enshroud all in its musky shade.

After tacking every quarter of an hour for a whole day, Captain Scott thought he had fetched sufficiently to windward of the ice field to heave to and give his weary crew some rest.

He had discovered that the vessel did not leak nearly so badly when on the starboard tack as on the other, and of course took advantage of it, and hove her to on the starboard tack.

It was then found that one watch could easily keep her free.

Part of the other watch below he employed in shifting the cargo in the hold, and stopping as far as possible the worst of the leaks; so that one-fourth of the crew were enabled to turn into their bunks and get what they sorely wanted, rest and sleep. Tom Scott and his officers themselves shared the labour of their men, thereby setting an example of endurance, an endurance which could not fail to have a good effect. Indeed, he himself took less than his share of sleep, being

seldom off the deck for more than an hour and a half at a time.

After the terrible ordeal they had gone through, the almost incessant labour of the last few days, four, or at the most five hours' sleep out of the twenty-four was little enough; but the crew bore their hardships and hard work without a murmur.

It is wonderful how much men can undergo, in the way of incessant labour, hard fare, and the vigours of climate, when the object for which they are striving is dear life itself. All hands knew that it was a matter of vital importance to make the vessel seaworthy; at all events to repair the worst of the leaks, before she was overtaken by a heavy gale. And in those latitudes it may safely be said, that a week never passes without a storm. The captain and men of the *Walrus* were so far successful that after a couple of days' work shifting cargo and patching up sore places in the ice battered brig, she was considered so far water-tight that a short spell every two hours was sufficient to keep her nearly clear of water.

The weather had now become very much colder, and fresh ice formed wherever the spray of the sea fell.

The bows of the *Walrus* from the water's-edge to the rail were encumbered with a mass of ice, which constantly increased, and the standing and running rigging was also covered with frozen fog.

The southerly wind blowing from the bleak and desolate regions around the South Pole caused this fall in temperature.

In the day the thermometer stood at about 20° , or 12 below freezing; but at night it sank to 10° 5° degrees, and at times touched zero.

A week was passed by cruising about amidst almost perpetual fogs, which made it too dangerous to sail any considerable distance, or except under very short sail.

In the first week in January the wind hauled round to the north, and there was a corresponding rise in temperature.

The fog, too, rolled away, and once more our antarctic mariners had a view of the horizon and the open sea. To the southward a wonderful sight met their eyes.

CHAPTER IX.

THE first impression, as the fog rolled away before the north wind, produced on those on board the *Walrus* was wonder, as they gazed out on the scene opened before them to the south.

A gorgeous city of white marble and alabaster, situated close to the sea shore!

There were arches and columns, towers, pinnacles, and great massive buildings, like palaces. Again, there were what might be taken for fortresses, temples, public buildings, and all, as it seemed, of the purest white alabaster. It was hard, very hard to realise the fact, that all this which looked so solid was but ice, of different degrees of clearness and density, which gave the variations in tint.

There were hundreds of these, a vast fleet, of all shapes and sizes, drifting, slowly but surely drifting north from the frozen regions of their birth, with the southerly current. And as they came north, the warmer north winds thawed them, and the ice of which they were composed melting always most at the northern side, caused them to assume all sorts of irregular and fantastic shapes.

Captain Scott and the mate stood together on the quarter deck, and gazed on the extraordinary scene in silence for some time.

"One could almost swear," remarked the mate presently, "that that was land, and a beautiful city on the shore. In fact, I can hardly persuade myself now that it is not. See, there are some parts of the icebergs darker, some of one tint, some of another, exactly as would be the case were it indeed a city."

"That's on account of the different strata of which the icebergs are composed; some of the ice is of snow, some from condensed fog, and some the clearest pure sea water frozen."

After satisfying their curiosity by looking long and wonderingly at this iceberg fleet, Captain Scott headed the brig to the south, and stood toward the bergs.

At the time the fog cleared away, the bergs were at a considerable distance, about fifteen miles; though from their

great size and whiteness they appeared much nearer. The sea between them and the road was plainly clear of ice, so that there was no danger in running down to them.

"It seems like a solid wall of ice," remarked the mate Royston, after an hour's run before a brisk breeze which had greatly decreased the distance between the brig and the bergs.

"Nevertheless," replied the Captain, "there are channels and passages through those pillars. I can make them out with the glass, though to the naked eye it seems as you say—a solid wall of ice. Look for yourself."

He handed the mate the glass, who put it to his eye, and turned it on what seemed an impassable icy barrier.

"Yes; I see openings between the bergs and make out the sea washing against their bases. But as to these being channels, I can't answer for it. They may be, or they may not be."

"They're channels, safe enough," said Bob Garnet, who was at the helm, and who was privileged to offer his opinion to his superiors. "There's no such thing as blind alleys among the icebergs, so far as my experience goes. But as to whether there are passages to which a prudent captain would trust his ship, that's another matter."

Tom Scott was silent.

The old salt had, it would appear, divined his half-formed intention of endeavouring to take the brig among and through the fleet of great ice monsters to what he believed was the open sea beyond.

"There's clear water the other side of those bergs, Tom," he said, "in my opinion."

"Mebbe, there is—mebbe there isn't," said the sailor, comically.

"What's your opinion, Tom?" asked the Captain.

"As far as my opinion goes," was the reply, "I think there is open water, or at worst, only drift ice the other side of them chaps. For, you see, the icebergs is made alongside land which lies far away to the south. They tell me as they're the tail-ends of glaciers broken off and floated off to sea. Why—how—let that be as it may, the bergs would form close to land, so that when the summer comes and the current begins drifting the ice fields that break adrift to the north

the bergs being nearest the shore comes last—brings up the rear as it was. Not that there mayn't be ice fields floating about t'other side of them pillars. Sometimes you see the fast ice, that which generally clings to the shore all the winter, breaks adrift by reason of a fall or something, and then comes floating north after the fleet of icebergs."

"You think, then, that there's land away?" asked themate.

"Think!" replied the old sailor. "I'm dead certain of it. It stands to reason that there must be, else where would the icebergs come from. Every one knows that them things ain't made at sea, but grows along side the land, and then breaks off and drifts away for a cruise till they gets so far north as to melt right away to nothing. In course, there's land in my belief, a continent as big or bigger than Europe."

"Not inhabited, I should think, Bob," remarked Scott. "The intense cold of the winter around the north pole must be sufficient to freeze away all animal life."

"That's as the Lord wills it, Cap'n Scott. If he meant folk to live right down on the south pole, he'd fix a way so as the frost shouldn't kill 'em."

While this conversation was going on, the brig was sailing at the rate of seven knots before a stiff southerly breeze, which increased in force till it blew worse than half a gale of wind.

The vessel was now within three or four miles of the collection of icebergs.

Now the passages or channels between the bergs could be plainly distinguished.

They were of all sorts and sizes. Some straight and broad could be traced for a long distance right into the interior of this archipelago of floating ice mountains. Others winding and narrow, and others again appeared like mere cracks.

Nor here, however, could the open sea beyond the brig be seen.

"How thick do you think that lot of icebergs is?" asked Captain Scott of Bob Garnet.

"I've known a fleet of bergs as much as eighteen miles long and ten broad," replied the old sailor, "it ain't often that they are more than four or five miles across."

"I think we are going to have a gale of wind from the north

Mr. Royston. Take a couple of reefs in the topsails, and part the mainsail. It won't do to venture among those bergs under a press of canvass."

"You mean to try and find a passage through them then?" asked Royston, not without some astonishment.

"I do, Mr. Royston," replied the young captain; "it's my deliberate opinion that the islands we're in search of, and among which Captain John Scott, my uncle, is frozen in, lie only a degree or so to the south of those bergs. Besides its coming on to blow from the north, and its worse to have those fellows on our lee than the ruggedest lee shore man ever set eyes on; for when its land there's always bottom, and the anchors may hold, but here not all the chain cables of the British navy would find ground."

It seemed a desperate resolve this of the young captain's, after having once escaped almost by a miracle as it were, again to tempt fortune and venture among the icebergs, which appeared more terrible and dangerous even than the packs of floating ice.

This, however, was not really the case, as two bergs rarely approached very close to each other. This might be accounted for by the rush of waves which they caused as they rolled about, and which effectually kept any floating objects from approaching very close.

While the mate was superintending the reefing of the topsails Captain Scott again entered into conversation with the old sailor.

"I daresay you think its a very rash thing Garnet to venture among those ice mountains?"

"Well, there's danger in it there's no denying that," he replied, "but for my part I was never so skeary of bergs as of floating pack ice. You can keep out of the way of them fellows if you're careful, and unless you're blowing right down on 'em in a gale."

"And that's what we shall be if we attempt to heave off here. Its going to the great guns, and I doubt if it would be possible to get clear of the line of icebergs by standing either to the east or west before we should be drifted down among 'em. For you see, Tom, they can't drift with the wind as we do for they man to much water. There isn't one of those fellows

that hasn't more ice for a foundation underneath the surface than what we see above."

"Right you are, cap'n; they've all got ice-anchors down, so to say, and I don't know, taking all in all, but what the safest plan in the long run isn't what seems most dangerous and venturesome, runnin' right down among 'em."

Tom Scott, who was somewhat oppressed with responsibility of his position, felt much relieved at hearing this favourable opinion of the old arctic voyager as to the course he had determined to pursue.

The topsails were by this time double reefed, the mainsail furled, and the brig was standing in for the iceberg at a reduced rate, but still fast enough to take her among them in little over a quarter of an hour.

Captain Scott wished to bring her up on the port tack, and sail slowly along in a direction parallel with the line of bergs until he saw what he considered a good opening, which promised a channel right through to the clear water beyond.

"Starboard your helm!" he said to Bob Garnet at the wheel. "Starboard fore and main braces! Brace up the yards! Haul off the jib sheet!"

In a minute or so this was done, and the *Walrus*, close hauled on her port tack, stood on her course along the line of bergs which now were not much more than a mile on her lee.

Anxiously and eagerly on the look out, the young captain presently saw what he considered to be a favourable opening.

Without unnatural hesitation, however, he hesitated before he gave the order to keep her away before the wind once more—an order which must be irrevocable when once given, as by the time the vessel had got well before the wind, she would have been close to the bergs.

The gale was now alarmingly and rapidly increasing in violence.

The mercury in the barometer was falling, and heavy banks of clouds were massing together in the northern skies.

If this attempt to find a passage were to be made at all, it were better done at once, before a furious storm raged, when the brig might be almost unmanageable, just when it was necessary she should be under the most complete command. So

with a quickened pulse and a terrible feeling of responsibility he gave the order.

Down with the helm and keep her away, square the fore and main yards.

Then the brig slowly payed off before the wind, and in a minute or so was running right for the icebergs at race horse speed.

For just at that moment a heavy squall struck her, urging her through the water at the rate of full ten knots.

CHAPTER X,

Not a voice was heard on board the *Walrus* after the sails had been properly trimmed and she was in full career for the iceberg archipelago.

The men were leaning over the bulwarks, looking eagerly, anxiously out at the terrible array of icebergs ahead.

The mate was on the forecastle keeping his eye on the sea ahead, for submerged masses of ice and small floes if there should be any.

Captain Scott stood by the side of Bob Garnet at the helm, pale and nervous, but cool and self-possessed.

Selecting an opening fully half a mile in width between two enormous bergs, he caused the brig to be steered straight for it.

When within half a mile of this, the dull roar of the waves as they ceaselessly dashed against the bases of these ice mountains could plainly be heard.

The sound was hollow, hoarse, and melancholy in the extreme, and caused an inexhausting feeling of sadness and despondency in all who heard.

"Starboard! Starboard!" shouted the mate from the fore-castle.

The wheel flew round in Bob Garnet's hands, and the next minute a huge lump of ice nearly entirely submerged, appeared to sweep past the *Walrus's* lee quarter, as she came up to the wind.

It must have been many tons in weight, and probably was a piece broken off one of the large icebergs.

This conclusively proved the wisdom of the mate's foresight, in stationing himself on the forecastle, on the look-out.

For it is certain, that if the vessel at the pace she was then going at, had come into collision with this piece of ice, her bars must have been stove in.

They were now so close to the bergs as to feel the deadly chill which so great a mass of ice caused.

Although the wind was from the north, a warm quarter in those latitudes, the thermometer fell rapidly from 33 degrees, a point above freezing, to 15 deg.—17 deg. below freezing. And as the little brig stood on, it grew colder and colder, and that with such suddenness as to strike a deadly chill to the bodies of all.

As the brig passed out between the two gigantic bergs, the scene was grand and imposing in the extreme.

On either hand two giant mountains of ice, rocking to and fro with a slow solemn motions.

Each of these was more than a quarter of a mile in length, by a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet in breadth.

The sides were precipitous, often overhanging, forming a canopy of ice, beneath which a small vessel might have sailed.

These overhanging masses presented a most dangerous appearance, and it seemed as though each moment a vast lump must break off and fall into the sea.

This indeed was often the case, for under the influence of the summer sun, great masses on the sides exposed to his rays did frequently fall into the sea with a great splash.

"All hands stand by the braces," cried Captain Scott, "every man to his station. No hanging over the bulwarks looking out. A moments delay in swinging the yards may be certain death to all of us."

The men obeyed instantly, for all were aware of their great peril, and the necessity for promptitude in avoiding bergs and floating ice in ahead.

The passage or channel into which Captain Scott had so boldly steered the *Walrus*, ran nearly straight for nearly half a mile. Then it suddenly narrowed and bent to the left,

two large icebergs, with smaller ones between, being right ahead.

"Starboard easy, starboard," cried Tom Scott, as the wind approached this place, "turn the yards as she comes up to the wind, ready to flatten in the jib sheet."

With a slow and powerful sweep, the vessels head came up about five points to the wind, which then blew broad on her port quarter.

The sails were quickly trimmed to this new course, and away she sped along a channel or passage about three hundred yards in width, with icebergs of all shapes and sizes on either hand.

The wind howled and moaned dismally among the gullies and ravines of the icebergs, and occasionally a furious gust would burst on the brig as she passed a narrow opening between two ice mountains.

But as she got further in among the bergs the sea grew much smoother, and the violence of the wind abated.

This was a matter for great congratulation with Tom Scott, for he by no means liked the idea of tearing away at headlong speed with such dangerous company all around.

The constant dull roar of the waves and whistling howl of the wind was revived by an occasional dull splash, as some huge lump of ice fell into the sea.

The vessel was now going about four knots an hour, and was thoroughly under command, answering readily to her helm at the turn of three or four spokes of the wheel.

The young Captain saw with satisfaction that, though as he penetrated yet farther among the bergs the channel in places grew much narrower, yet that there were plenty to choose from, and that if things went on as at present, he would, barring any untoward accident, succeed in threading safely this terrible maze.

Hitherto no drift or pack ice had been seen, but the brig went on, frequent grindings and crashings (sounds but too familiar) told of danger which they could not see.

The further they penetrated among the labyrinth of bergs the smoother grew the sea, and but for the occasional gusts the lighter the wind.

At one time the brig was almost becalmed, and had lost

nearly all her way through the water. She had just motion enough for steering purposes, and the Captain began to grow anxious. If they were to be becalmed amidst a shoal of icebergs, their fate could not be long delayed. The vessel would assuredly be heaved by the waves and dashed against one of the ice monsters, or might, perhaps, be crushed to smithereens between two of them.

The *Walrus* was now heading to the westward, in which direction the best channel the Captain could see appeared.

To the south, along her starboard side, were a number of large icebergs so close together as to preclude any attempt at making a passage in that direction.

Tom Scott was in hopes that the channel which now led nearly due west would take a turn south, or that another might be discovered.

This failure of the wind though was an extremely unfavourable circumstance, for without steerage way a sailing vessel is helpless.

A tremendous cracking and groaning, a voice like the report of a park of artillery, and then a heavy dull splash.

"Lord, save and deliver us. What's that?" cried Bob Garnet.

For a moment or two all gazed around in silent awe and wonder, for at first nothing could be seen to account for the tremendous and terrible sound.

CHAPTER XI.

EVEN as they gazed one of the huge icebergs, a couple of hundred yards or so on their starboard beam, was seen to rock to and fro, at first slowly, then with a more rapid motion, next it seemed to totter, then bowed towards the brig.

An involuntary cry, partly of terror, partly of sheer amazement, broke from the beholders as the huge mast of ice toppled slowly over, and with a roaring splash capsized, shivering into a hundred fragments as the upper part touched the sea. But before this happened, Captain Scott saw what was coming, and the inevitable result—a tremendous com-

motion of the sea and rush of giant waves. Herein he showed admirable promptitude, and thereby—aided by a brisk puff of wind from the south, which a few seconds before had struck the brig and filled her flapping sails—saved her from destruction.

“Hard up with the helm” he shouted, “shorten the main-top sail, flatten in the jib sheet.” These orders were rapidly executed, and the brig’s head payed off to the south, and a moment or two after the iceberg had toppled over, she was heading directly for it.

“Captain Scott,” cried old Bob Garnet, “you’ve saved the brig and all hands if she is to be saved. It has skeered me and knocked all the sense out o’ me. I should never have thought of puttin’ the helm up if it hadn’t been for you. Here comes the rollers. Great God have mercy on us!” Well might the old salt ejaculate this prayer, for tearing over the sea, coming right towards them from the capsized berg, was a tremendous wave, which seemed to reach as high as the main-top of the brig. Onwards it came with a roaring, hissing noise, which might well strike terror to the hearts of the bravest.

For a moment the crew of the *Walrus* gazed spell bound at this tremendous danger which came thundering down on the brig, as if bent on her utter destruction.

They were aroused from this stupor-like state by the voice of the captain, whose very best quality was his promptitude and energy in moments of extreme peril.

“To the rigging every man of you,” he shouted, “to the rigging and hold on for your lives.” Himself setting the example, the crew of the *Walrus* were all clinging to the shrouds close under the tops when the terrible wave reached her.

Had it struck her broadside on, as would have been the case, if the captain had not had the forethought to cause her to be put bows on to the wave, she must have been overwhelmed and capsized in an instant.

As the great wave struck her, she reared up as might a startled horse, and for a moment or two was almost upright. The next instant the wave passed under her keel, at the same time floating the decks and sweeping everything moveable

away. Then down she plunged headlong into the trough between this and the following wave. Once more tons and tons of water swept her deck, and she tosses up and down in such a violent manner that the shoulders of the sailors clinging like grim death to the shrouds are like to be torn from their sockets.

Then succeeded a minute or so of frantic tossing up and down and fierce battling waves on the part of the brig, as though she and the angry ocean were both struggling for the victory.

The fierce waves tossed the little bark up and down, jerking her masts almost out of her, causing her rigging to creak and strain, her masts to groan; sweeping her decks with furious rage, as though wishing to overwhelm her with the actual weight of water.

It was a hard fought fight, and while it lasted the crew of the *Walrus* were in a state of helpless terror, holding on for dear life to the shrouds. But while the last wave which tossed her and swept over her grew smaller, and of less power for harm, the good little brig remained the same, and with her the victory rested. It lasted about three minutes, but to the imperilled mariners aloft, it seemed an age.

Then gradually the waves subsided, the violent motion ceased, and presently the *Walrus* lay gently tossing to and fro on a comparatively calm sea, as though exhausted from the struggle.

As for the crew, so great was the shock to the nervous system, so terrible the strain on muscle, bone, flesh, and sinew, necessary to hold on whilst the ordeal lasted, that they could with difficulty crawl down on deck, on gaining which each man threw himself on the wet planks, panting, trembling for the time, weak and helpless as so many children. Bob Garnet, the captain, and mate are among the first to rise to their feet.

"Praise be to God for this and all His other mercies," ejaculated the pious old sailor. And a fervent Amen, which went round the ship, told that the usually reckless sailors appreciated the magnitude of the peril they had escaped, and were thankful.

"Captain Scott," said the old salt, taking his hand, "you've

SIX MONTHS' NIGHT.

saved the ship and all our lives. If you hadn't thought when the iceberg capsized to put her bows on to the wave you knew must come, we'd all be in Davy Jones's locker before this. You ain't the oldest seaman aboard, that's sartin', nor it may be in some things the best sailor, seein' as you're a trifle careless and rash; but in the moment of danger, at times when the bravest may well be flabbergasted and all of a tremble, I've never seen your equal, and I've sailed the salt sea man and boy for forty years."

These words of the old sailor caused Tom Scott a glow of pride, and he replied with brimming eyes, "Thank you, Bob, for your good opinion. Now we'll turn to and see what's to be done; there's a breeze springing up again."

During the rocking and tossing the little vessel had undergone, her head had been slewed round, and now pointed to the north-west. The sails were all about, and she was rapidly gathering stern way, when, under the direction of the captain, the crew, now recovered from the short incident on this desperate adventure, proceeded to haul round the yards and get her before the wind.

While all this which we have been fully describing was being enacted about the ship a wonderful scene was going on among the icebergs—a scene which no one on board witnessed for the excellent reason that they had all their work to preserve their own lives.

Of course, the gigantic waves, commencing at the iceberg which capsized, radiated in all directions from this centre.

As the rollers reached the other bergs, they caused a prodigious commotion.

The prospect, could any one have stood in sight and witnessed it, would have been grand and wonderful in the extreme.

The nearest bergs which the wave assailed began to oscillate slowly at first, but each roll became heavier, and roller after roller rushed on. At last all the bergs within a quarter of a mile were tossing about—those nearest the cause, madly, those farther off with less violence. Dozens of bergs of all shapes, large and small, were rocking and tossing together as though doing a sort of iceberg dance.

Presently loud crashes and crackings might have been heard as great pieces broke off, unable to stand the violent motion.

Then in these cases, the centre of gravity having been changed, the iceberg would capsize and generally smash up into one or more fragments.

Fortunately, no large berg near the brig so broke up, or the exhausted crew might have been compelled again to take to the rigging, with little hope in their then state of being able to hold on.

In ten minutes after the oversetting of the first berg all was over; a wonderful change had come over the scene, and the captain and crew of the *Walrus* would have shouted for joy as they beheld clear water to the southward—open sea as far as the eye could reach.

The capsizing of this one big iceberg had cleared us a way, and, moreover, caused the destruction of others to the south and west. With a southerly breeze the brig *Walrus* dashed ahead, and in an hour's time bade farewell to the archipelago of icebergs.

It is approaching the end of February, and also the end of the short antarctic summer, when next we behold the brig *Walrus*.

For weeks since the almost miraculous escape from the flocs and the icebergs she has been knocking about amidst fogs and gales, and fields of ice, which constantly baffled her, and seemed with malicious pertinacity to bar her way to the southern latitude her captain wished to reach.

But despite all obstacles, and after having been blown north several times by hard northerly gales, Captain Tom Scott had succeeded by dogged perseverance on gaining nearly two whole degrees to the south.

And, what is more, had sighted land, and on the morning of this 25th of February, the black rugged outlines of an island could be plainly discerned to the south-west.

There was highland, or a mountain, the summit of which was covered with snow. The lower part, however, was black, and through the glass the rocks could be distinguished, denuded of their white mantle by the rays of the summer sun.

Between the brig and the island there is ice in abundance

to be seen—not a solid pack or floe, however, but only in innumerable broken pieces—floating about.

Ice to the east, ice to the west, ice to the north, ice all around. Nowhere, however, so dense or compact as to prevent any obstacle to the brig's progress, merely diminishing her speed, rendering it almost impossible to tack ship and making her answer her helm badly.

Warnings are not wanting of the approach of the antarctic winter, but the view of the distant land buoyed up the Captain and crew with hope, and it was calculated that their stay in these regions might be prolonged for another month.

Through the spy glass innumerable seals and sea horses could be seen from aloft at the base of the distant island, and far away on the horizon beyond this first land, other dark specks, which, on close examination, Tom Scott felt convinced were also land.

And so the *Walrus* was doggedly and perseveringly worked towards the south, in spite of southerly gales and drift ice.

The young Captain had more than one strong inducement to reach and explore the land he saw, before turning his back on the antarctic regions.

In the first place, he believed that this was really the group his uncle had discovered, and he felt pretty well convinced that in returning too far south late in the season, he had been frozen in, beyond the possibility of extrication.

The fate of the worthy mariner, should this surmise turn out to be correct, would turn on one thing.

There was an abundance of food—the seals and walrus he saw from the foretop of the brig convinced him of that, but fuel, what of that? If there was wood or timber of any kind on the island he might be alive now, or the frozen in mariners might have broken up their vessel for firewood, without which it would be impossible to live through the terrible winter.

Or again, they might all have perished, in which case the Captain of the *Walrus* hoped to find some record of their fate.

Buoyed up with these hopes, and the certainty that on reaching the islands they would be able to fill up in a few weeks with seal skins, oil, and walrus ivory, Captain Scott, with stubborn determination, worked his vessel to the north.

This was a task of much difficulty, even with a fair wind from the north or north-east, by reason of the immense quantity of floating ice continually drifting northwards.

Hitherto the weather for these latitudes had been singularly mild, but at the end of the last week in February there were symptoms of an approaching change.

A heavy gale sprung up from the east and north-east with a falling barometer.

This was safely weathered.

Then it fell dead calm and a thick haze was seen to the north—a sure sign of severe weather.

Great numbers of antarctic birds passed over the vessel, all flying north as though aware of what was coming.

And, lastly, the mercury in the barometer rose rapidly, while that in the thermometer fell in proportion.

Bob Garnet, an old hand among the regions of ice, looked grave at these signs and spoke of the desirability of working southward again. But the Captain would not hear of it, declaring that to turn their backs on the goal of their hopes—on the very eve of success—would be weak minded in the extreme.

“The summer’s not over yet, and when once we do turn her head round, a week will take us into clear water with the prevailing southerly gales.”

“That’s true enough if all this here floating ice ain’t knit together by snow and frozen fog and new ice—for I notice, Captain, that new ice forms every night two or three inches thick whenever its a little calm.”

“But it is not likely to be calm enough for even ice to form to any extent, urged Scott, the succession of gales we may fairly expect will keep us from being frozen in.”

“God send they may, Cap’n,” the old sailor said devoutly. “It’s been my lot to pass more than one winter among the ice in perpetual darkness night and day for over two months—not a glimpse of the blessed sun to cheer us. I never want to spend another in these here high latitudes.”

“I don’t think there’s any danger for another month at least,” Captain Scott said, “the summer’s been unusually mild.”

“And that’s just the reason, according to my experience of

these latitudes, that the winter should be a more than ordinary severe."

"Anyhow" said the captain, decidedly "we're safe for a week or two, and we must have a few hundred of those seals and sea horses to fill up with. Ten hours' northerly wind and we might bring the brig to under the lee of the island; and instead of ten hours' northerly wind, it seems to me were going to have twenty of a northerly gale."

And sure enough there came a biting blast from the inclement regions around the north pole laden with bitter frost, snow, hail, and fog.

Then, after blowing for nearly twenty-four hours, a hard gale, it fell dead calm.

The fog froze on the decks and the rigging till the planks were one sheet of ice, and the ropes had to be beaten with iron belaying pins before they could run through the blocks.

Frequent heavy snowstorm covered the whole expanse of fast freezing loose ice with a white mantle, and after an unusually bitter cold night—the thermometer many degrees below zero—the crew of the *Walrus* found to their dismay that the brig was frozen in hard and fast.

The only hope of escape was in a northerly gale, which might break up the ice, and from its warmth would not suffer it to form again.

But of this there was no prospect—the sky remained clear, the thermometer high, and after a week's bitter cold all hands on board the *Walrus* knew for a dead certain that they were doomed to pass the winter in those inclement regions.

CHAPTER XII.

Of course every precaution was taken to provide against the severity of the winter.

The brig lay about two miles to the northward of the island first seen, and for greater convenience in the way of fires, Captain Scott resolved to build a rude house on the shore—in a spot sheltered from the piercing southerly blasts.

He hoped to get wood of some sort which might be used as fuel.

Accordingly, he employed one half the men in building a house on shore, and making a road across the ice from the brig to the island; while the remainder, under the command of himself, hunted seal and walrus and white bears for the sake of their fat, oil, and skins.

And so winter crept on apace—a winter the deadly severity of which no one can possibly imagine who has not experienced it—the cold sometimes as great as fifty degrees, and even sixty degrees, below zero.

To fight against this intense cold large fires night and day are absolutely necessary, and before the sun had finally disappeared for the long long night more than half their stock had already been used.

And mid-winter had not yet come.

This was, indeed, a terrible prospect.

Without fuel, and that in abundance, they must all certainly perish.

Accordingly, an expedition was organised, under the command of Bob Garnet, to visit the islands they could see far away to the south in the hope of finding something in the way of firewood, otherwise it would be necessary ere long to commence breaking up all the wood-work of the ship which could possibly be spared.

The expedition returned with two sledge loads of wood—and astounding news.

Under the lee of the island—fast frozen in, probably for years—they had come across the lost ship, the *Kangaroo*.

She was covered many feet deep with ice and frozen snow, which they cut away with their hatchets.

The crew were all on board frozen to death each with a thick film of ice over his body, frozen fog, clear as glass, through which the features of the dead could be distinctly seen.

The intense cold had preserved the bodies from decay, and though they had probably been dead for years, they looked as fresh as though it had taken place but yesterday.

The captain was found dead on the cabin floor, close to the stove, which, like everything else, was encrusted with ice.

No attempt was made to disturb the bodies, and the party

proceeded to load the two sledges with wood by breaking up the upper works of the ship.

Thus was the mystery solved and an ample supply of fire-wood secured for the winter.

The *Walrus* and her crew weathered the long, dark, sunless winter, and early in summer, when the ice broke up, sailed away to the north with a full cargo of seal and walrus oil, skins and ivory, and certain knowledge of the fate of Captain John Scott, the unfortunate *Kangaroo*, and crew.

They left them there in their cold grave, where probably, kept from decay by their winding sheets of ice, Captain John Scott and his dead crew will rest unchanged till the day of judgment.

THE HOUR OF PERIL.

THE Indians were committing horrible acts of inhumanity and barbarity at the time at which occurred the incident that I am about to relate. Many indeed were the poor, defenceless settlers that fell victims beneath the bloody scalping-knife and the deadly tomahawk of the red men of the forest. Many were the innocent little children and dear mothers that suffered from the horrible deeds of Indian barbarity, and many were the sad partings when the settlers were called forth to defend their dear families and homes from the hands of the miscreant foe that threatened them.

The settlement was small—not numbering over fifty inhabitants at most, men, women, and children. The settlers, though few in number, were men to be relied on—men who cared not for death, let it come as it might, if they were to meet it in defence of their homes. They feared not double their number of Indians, for they never thought of fear in such a cause. They had all possible confidence in one another, and particularly in their leader, young though he was to command, and to have at his disposal so large a force of sturdy hunters. Old men, whose heads were white with the frost of eighty winters, bore to him a particular respect, unknown to any other one among them.

Clifton Wallace was only a young man, about twenty years of age; was the son of a poor hunter, one of the first settlers of Kentucky, who had, shortly after Clifton's birth, been brutally murdered by the Indians. When he became old enough to know that his father had met the dreadful fate of being burnt and tortured at the stake

until almost dead, then taken and shot, he declared that there should not exist—at a time which he mentioned—an Indian east of the Mississippi if he could get within musket range of him. With a hatred so bitter as this an enemy could not expect much mercy at his hands. Thus he lived and thus he died.

He had sent death to many an unsuspecting foe, and now that they, his most bitter enemies, threatened an attack upon the settlement, and he was at the head of his little band of heroes, he felt as though his time for revenge had come. With feelings of the warmest patriotism he went about the work which lay before him. All the families of the settlement were ordered to the blockhouse, there to be provided with better means of defence, and if the anticipated attack should come at an unexpected hour, they would be better prepared for it, surrounded as they would be by the strongest defence that the settlement could possibly afford.

“Let every man keep at his post, and if any object suspicious in the least is observed, let the observer report, without delay, to me,” were the captain’s orders.

No more was necessary. The men knew their duty, and were determined to hold their little stronghold as long as possible. Scouts were out in every direction, watching for the foe. All was in a bustle at the blockhouse, and to add to the excited fear of the females, scouts were almost constantly arriving, and all having a different story to tell.

“Well, I’m beginnin’ to think it’s all a fabrication concernin’ their attack, and I’ve my doubts whether there’s any redskins near,” observed one man.

“If you think it’s a lie I’m afther tellin’ you, you’d better go see for yourself, old Wenows,” replied a son of the Emerald Isle.

"Paddy McCloy, did you see them yourself, or did you hear the story from some other person?" Wallace asked, approaching the Irishman.

"Shure, an' it's meself that saw 'em, captin. Paddy McCloy's eyes don't desave him in that kind o' sthile. They're there, shure, captin."

"And how many do you suppose?"

"Well, captin, there's no tellin', but if I was to give as thrue a statement as my observation would permit, I'd say about a thousan' o' thim."

The mention of so large a number, which all the settlers knew was considerably magnified, brought a smile to the face of almost every one near, and some even shook with laughter at the idea; but the Irishman cared nought for that, and continued—

"Jist you follow meself, an' if I don't run you in 'mong 'em, then my name ain't Paddy McCloy, from the City of Cork, in ould Ireland."

Some of the men were about to start with him, but were stopped by Clifton Wallace, who remarked—

"Men, hold a moment. Here comes Will Gaston, running with all his might. Perhaps he can tell us something more particular concerning this affair. From the way he travels, something surely has occurred to make him move so fast. However, I shall soon know."

And as he finished speaking he started off in the direction of the advancing man. They soon met.

"Where is the enemy, Gaston—are they near?" was Wallace's first inquiry.

"About two miles distant from here, encamped in the forest," answered Gaston, gasping for breath as he did so. "And now," he added, after a few moments' rest, "I have something to tell you, and I bid you prepare for it.

We are alone now, and I have a good chance to tell you!"

"What is it? Be quick, Gaston, I am ready to hear it."

"Lizzie is a prisoner in the hands of the Indians!"

As if struck by a thunderbolt, Clifton Wallace became perfectly motionless. Not a muscle moved as he stood there with his gaze fixed upon Gaston, so surprised was he at the news just related.

It was only for a moment that he stood thus. After recovering from the sudden shock, he looked behind him, and observed several men leaving the blockhouse and coming towards him and Gaston. After motioning them back, he again inquired, in a surprised tone—

"Are you certain of what you have just spoken? Surely you are mistaken, for not three hours ago I saw her at the blockhouse."

"Lizzie Benton?"

"Yes; I am perfectly satisfied I saw her there at the time mentioned."

"Well, she is in the hands of the Indians now. But the question is, how did she get there—by what means?"

"Gaston, I am as ignorant as yourself about how she came into their possession. Let us go to the blockhouse now—we may probably gain some information there."

Together the two young men started in the direction of the blockhouse, where, on arriving, they found all anxiously waiting their return. All, we said, but there was one—true, she was waiting, but not at the place where the others were!

Perhaps the thought may arise, why should Clifton Wallace be so particularly interested concerning Lizzie Benton's welfare? It is easily explained. To know that

a friend was in the hands of a deadly foe, ought of itself to be enough to arouse the kindest and most tender feelings of man, but to be in possession of the knowledge that a person dearer than a *friend*, one that we love above all others, is in an equally distressing situation, should render our desires to recapture that loved one stronger, and prompt us to greater efforts. Such was Clifton Wallace's condition. He was in love with Lizzie Benton, and indeed it was whispered about the settlement that they were engaged.

But to our story.

On arriving at the blockhouse, inquiry was made about the lost; and it was found that she, contrary to orders, had left the house to take a stroll in the forest. When she left she said she was not going far, and would soon be back, consequently none even thought of her being captured by the Indians. A strong guard was posted all round the blockhouse, and yet she passed them all unnoticed, and reached the forest.

What was to be done? An attack was expected almost momentarily upon the blockhouse—Lizzie was in the Indians' possession—she must be recaptured—but how? Ah, that was the question none knew how to answer!

"Men," said Clifton, addressing the settlers, "we have a good deal of work before us. Can we accomplish it? I think we can, or at least we will try. Will Groton and I will leave in a few moments, and my command, for the time being, will devolve upon Joe Hyder. You all know him, and I know can trust your lives in his hands, for if victory is to be ours he will certainly lead us to it. All I ask is, trust him till we come back, and, my word for it, you will receive just, kind treatment from him."

The two young men started together. With kind words

of hope they left the many dear ones in the blockhouse to search for one far dearer to Clifton Wallace.

Will and Clifton were almost inseparable companions, and did everything in their power to promote each other's happiness.

Will knew exactly where the Indians lay encamped, and for the simple reason that he might point out the place where he had observed the object of their search, and the thought that he might be of some assistance to Clifton, he determined to accompany him.

It was nearly dark when they left the blockhouse, and this was considerable help to them, for as they were perfectly acquainted with the nature of the surrounding country, they could travel with less fear of being noticed by the Indians. Cautious were their footsteps as they travelled through the darkness in the direction of the Indian encampment.

On passing the outer picket, Wallace gave particular orders for a strict attention to duty, and the first appearance of any evil omen to spread the alarm that all might hear and prepare for action.

After passing the last picket the two young settlers changed the direction hitherto pursued, and continued their travel in a more circuitous direction, which, although it occupied more time, finally resulted in the accomplishment of their designs.

Arriving within a few hundred yards of the encampment, they secured themselves in an old hollow log, and awaited patiently for the event which would lead to the recovery of the prisoner. Long did they wait—till almost midnight, when to their gratification, the Indians began moving in the direction of the blockhouse. We say it was a gratification, for they had no fear of the final result of an attack,

while, besides this. it would aid them in recapturing Lizzie Benton.

Soon the Indians had all gone, except three left behind to guard their prisoner. An hour afterwards and the forest rang with the continual shouts of the Indians and the roar of musketry, for they had made the attack already. And while the fight was progressing, Wallace and Gaston cautiously stole from their hiding-place and advanced unobserved to within a few yards of the spot where the prisoner lay.

"Death to the infernal forest blood-hounds," shouted Wallace, and before the Indians knew from whence came the shout, two of them were lying dead upon the spot where a moment before they were in the enjoyment of life. The other one ran, not knowing whither, so frightened was he at the unexpected occurrence. He had gone only a few paces when a ball from one of the settler's "six-shooters" brought his retreat to a final end.

Thus far their work was well done; three of the Indians had bit the dust, and what was still more to the settlers' credit, they had recovered the lost one. But how were they to reach the blockhouse? True, they had the prisoner, but firing still continued at the place which they wished to reach in safety, and this caused doubts to arise as to their welfare. They knew their assistance was needed at the fort, and they determined to reach it at all hazards. So they started, little caring for themselves, but the lady with them.

They were soon again almost back to the blockhouse, but while the firing continued and the house of defence was surrounded by Indians, there was no hope of admittance. Although they could not gain admittance to the fort they knew all was going well, for the hideous cries of

anguish that rent the air told plainly of the Indians suffering. There was yet work for them to do. Raising their rifles they fired in the darkness with considerable rapidity, all the time unnoticed by the enemy, and every time bringing down an Indian.

Finally the firing ceased and the Indians began a retreat in the direction of the settlement, only a half-mile distant. The fire in that direction told of the fiendish work being performed by the enraged Indians. They had set on fire every dwelling in the settlement, and so furious did the flames leap upon everything consumable that not an hour, scarcely, after they commenced their work of revenge, but every house was in ashes.

The little party of adventurers were soon inside the blockhouse again. Captain Wallace, then at the head of his men, started in pursuit of the retreating foe, and soon came up with them; but the Indians would not stand fight. Why it was none could tell at that time, but on returning and looking among the dead, they soon knew the reason, for there lay their chief among the slain. After his death they could not fight, so almost instantaneously they began a retreat. The settlers' loss in the engagement was only one man killed and several slightly wounded, except the loss of all their dwellings.

The settlement was soon rebuilt again, with the addition of several new dwellings, the occupants of one of which was Clifton Wallace and his wife, once Lizzie Benton. They were never again disturbed by the Indians, but lived the remainder of their days happily together in the enjoyment of every comfort their forest home could furnish.

THE DOOMED ONE.

"ETTIE, dear," said I, "what is the trouble? You are pale as ashes? Is the baby sick? Where is Charley?"

"The baby is very well, and Charles has gone to ride on the Bloomingdale Road."

There was a slight flush over her pale face as she said this, but it subsided in a moment, leaving her face, especially around her mouth, of a startling whiteness. I saw that she had some trouble that it was not for me to know, and I devoted myself to the baby.

Esther Dearborn had been little more than a year a wife, and now she laid her first-month-old rosebud in his little cradle. It was a wonderful little ark of rest, with sky-blue canopy, and snowy blankets and counterpanes; and his little robe was a dainty embroidery, that cost a deal of money, and the lace, and the blue ribbons, and the gold sleeve-chains, ought to have comfort in them—they cost enough. But they did not lighten the heavy heart of the young mother, on this most lovely October afternoon.

"What can it be?" said I to myself, when I found that all my praises of the cherub baby, and his beautiful surroundings, did not restore Ettie's gaiety. She was naturally as cheerful and happy as she was innocent—one of those gentle people who never take their own part. Her bosom would swell, her heart and her eyes would grow leaden, but no word gave relief. From day to day her intolerable patience was only equalled by her suffering. I knew all that, for Ettie and I had been heart-friends from her childhood.

I was five years Ettie's senior, and therefore I had taken

the tone of a matron with her. She was married at seventeen, and now she was a little over eighteen, and I had reached the mature age of three and twenty. Why should she not confide in me, as of old? I sat thinking this, with the baby on my lap, when I saw Ettie go to the window, and look out very earnestly.

"Dinner will have to wait," said she. "How I wish Charley would not make dinner wait! Cook is so cross—she says dinner is spoiled, and she is blamed when Mr. Dearborn is not at home in season. And this is the third day that dinner has waited. I am really afraid cook will give warning."

I laughed heartily, and said, "Mr. Dearborn will have to ask leave of the cook if he wishes to stay out late."

"We dine at six, and he did not come till seven," said Ettie, gravely.

I smiled this time, but said nothing. I saw that her husband's absence was affecting her in some way unaccountable to me, and I tried to lead her thoughts to other things. She stayed by the window, and I tended the baby till seven o'clock, and then she cried in an excited tone, "Here they are."

I went to the window. I was curious to see who *they* were.

Charles Dearborn was an elegant man, and he rode up to his grand home in the Fifth Avenue on a superb black horse. A lady, who sat on her horse like a queen, swept up on a milk-white Arabian. A green hat and riding-habit, with crimson trimmings, set off her fine person to great advantage.

"Who is that lady, Ettie?" said I.

"Mrs. Lee," said she. "You have heard me speak of Grace Illsley, who was at school with me the first year I

was at M——. She married General Lee, of New Orleans, three years ago. She has been two years a widow."

"How long has she been here?" said I.

"More than a week."

A week, and Charles Dearborn was riding horseback with her every evening already!

"Her health is delicate, and her physician insists that she must ride horseback daily on the road, and she cannot go alone, of course," said Ettie, answering my thought. "Charles says it is a great bore," and she looked as if she would give the world to believe him.

We all met over a spoiled dinner. Mr. Dearborn was not well pleased with a dinner an hour old, and he had himself to thank for it.

"I am sure I deserve to be whipped," said Mrs. Lee, "for getting my provoking cough, for I have defrauded you all of your nice dinner by the means; and then I am sure my doctor is a stupid, or he could cure me without this everlasting horseback-riding. But how exhilarating it is, to be sure! I never feel as if I were alive, except when I am on a noble horse. How I delight to rock in the cradle of a canter, with the fresh breeze careering by! It is the lullaby of existence—and what a horse Selim is! I should like to spend half my life on that horse's back. Do you know he kisses me every day, when we meet and when we part?"

The lady became wonderfully animated as she spoke. She looked more like Semiramis on the start for battle, than like a poor invalid with a cough, who had horseback-riding prescribed to save her from consumption.

"Selim is a noble fellow," said Mr. Dearborn, who was delighted with a compliment paid to his beautiful Arabian, that had cost him three thousand dollars.

We went up from dinner, and Mrs. Lee sat down to the piano. Ettie was weary, for her strength was given to her babe, and her husband seemed to forget that her first-born was only a month old.

"I must go up-stairs," said she, and she looked white and weak.

"Oh, not yet, Ettie," said her husband. "You must hear just one of our duets. You have not heard us sing yet. That boy is a regular monopolist. I shall not spare you for half an hour yet."

"Indeed, Charles, I must go up-stairs. I am not able to sit up."

He went with her, but not graciously, and he hurried her—I could see this, for I offered to go, and went to the stairs, but she sent me back, saying—

"I will lie down a little while, and be very bright for the evening."

Mr. Dearborn came down directly, and he and Mrs. Lee began to sing. Their voices harmonized in a very remarkable manner. The lady sang and played brilliantly, and both enjoyed the music greatly.

My mind wandered all the time to Ettie's room, and as soon as I could with propriety I went up to her. She lay still and pale on the bed, and I knew she felt her husband's neglect. He had been down-town all day, till he came home to ride with Mrs. Lee, and she had only seen him for a hasty moment then, and she wished for her after-dinner hour, that he had always given her ever since their marriage till Mrs. Lee came.

I guessed all as I sat by the bed, and held her cold hand to mine. I said in my heart he will come up soon, and so I sat and held that little hand, and said soft words of the baby. But he did not come. An hour went by, and I

went down to ask Mr. Dearborn to see his wife, for she seemed really ill to me.

The gentleman and lady were deep in a game of chess. I did not like to speak; I took a book from the centre-table and returned to Ettie. Poor, patient lamb! so white and still. If Mr. Charles Dearborn had had me to deal with, he would have been waked from his dream of delight before he had begun to dream it. But his wife was one of the sort who "die and give no sign"; she would not take decent care to keep her husband from being swindled out of his life happiness.

"Ettie," said I, "you are ill. Shall I call your husband?"

"I am a little fatigued," said she.

"That is true, but not the whole truth. Charles is deep in the game, thinking all the time, 'I will go up to Ettie in a few minutes;' but there he stays. You know chess is a very fascinating game."

"And that is why I would not disturb him. You don't know, Fanny dear, how he devotes himself to business. He is a real slave, and when he can have any little amusement I don't like to disturb it. He would come to feel me a burden if I did."

There was the woman's secret. She was going to lose her husband for fear of losing him. He must feel himself free. His wife must not be a burden to him. Why in the name of common sense and common humanity did he get a wife, if he did not want the burdens that the state of matrimony necessarily brings with it?

"You are all wrong, Ettie," said I. "Men love to be in bondage. They are burden-bearers by nature, and many a man is kept out of mischief by an exacting wife, who

allows him no time to be tempted. I would not leave my husband alone with Mrs. Lee."

"Grace is a high-principled woman," said Ettie, icily.

Now I always speak what others think and are too cautious to speak.

"I say nothing against her principles," said I; "but I don't like her practice. I want you to send me down for your husband. I will tell him you are ill, and break up that game."

"Fanny, dear, don't try to make mischief between Charlie and me."

If any one else had spoken so to me I should have been indignant. As it was my own Ettie I was glad. It was a sort of return to her old confidence.

"Did you know Mrs. Lee much at school?" said I.

"Not much. I was a good deal younger than she was, and she was only a year at school after I went. I heard there was some scandal about her that made her leave the school. It was said that she was placed there by some improper person, or something of the kind. I hardly know what it was," said Ettie, wearily.

"And have you told your husband of this?"

"No. Why should I? It might be only an idle tale. Charles knew her husband, and liked him very much, and she could not come better recommended to him than as the widow of his friend. Charlie would think me jealous and ridiculous if I should speak of such an idle story."

Here again the wife's self-love came in. Her husband would not be pleased with her if she were frank with him. She wanted to please him at all hazards. Poor Ettie!

At ten o'clock Mr. Dearborn came up, and I kissed the pale, cold cheek of Ettie and went to my room. I had

come to stay three days. I made up my mind to stay three weeks, if Mrs. Lee remained so long. I soon found that I might remain indefinitely if I were governed by her movements. She had secured a pleasant home and an attentive cavalier, and she would be in no haste to relinquish either. She devoted herself during the day a good deal to Mrs. Dearborn. She was delighted with the baby, and busied herself embroidering blankets and sacs for him. I found her very much in my way; but I could only bear it as patiently as possible.

Ettie gained no strength. Indeed, at the end of three weeks she was weaker than when I came. Whenever I spoke of returning home she begged so piteously that I would stay that I stayed.

Every day Mrs. Lee wound some new coil around Charles Dearborn, and the poor, patient, fearful wife made no effort to break her spells. The commencement of the opera season was as auspicious to Mrs. Lee as the horse-back-riding had been. Yet, during all this time, I believe in my soul that Charles Dearborn had no wish to wrong his wife. If she had once complained, or rated him soundly, as I should have done, there would have been an end of his folly.

I became every day more and more satisfied that this woman was an unprincipled adventuress, but where was my proof? It came soon—deep and damning. One evening Ettie had retired at eight o'clock; Charles proposed that we should have some "hot stuff." The old-fashioned name struck our fancy, and he brewed four tumblers of some delicate hot liquor, I hardly know what. A tumbler was set aside to take up to Ettie, and as Charles's back was turned, Mrs. Lee passed it. Just then

Charles saw her in the mirror drop a powder in the glass. He turned and carelessly asked if some nutmeg would not improve the drink. She went to the bell, and when her back was towards him, he exchanged his wife's tumbler for hers. When she had grated some nutmeg over each, he took up Ettie's, and said, tasting it—

“It is not right after all; it has a very odd taste.”

Mrs. Lee drank off a quarter part of hers in an agitated way, saying she was sure it was made just right. She never tasted any drink that was more delicious. Charles Dearborn started to carry the tumbler to his wife, and as he passed Mrs. Lee he jostled against her, apparently from accident, and upset her glass, spilling the last drop of its contents.

“I did not wish to have her die,” said he, afterwards. “I wanted her to live to be punished.”

“I beg pardon,” said he. “Am I not the awkwardest fellow alive? Take my glass, Mrs. Lee, and I will brew another when I come down.”

He went up-stairs and threw away the contents of the glass, and then threw himself on the bed beside his wife, weeping, and embracing her passionately.

Ettie was frightened. “What is the matter, dear Charles?”

Charles could not answer her, and in a few minutes I ran up-stairs to tell him that Mrs. Lee was deathly sick. She had violent cramps in the stomach, and it seemed as if she could not live till a physician could be called.

Mr. Dearborn had her carried to her room, and the nearest physician was summoned. He said she was poisoned with arsenic, and he doubted much whether her life would be saved. Everything was done that

could do, and the next day Mrs. Lee was pronounced out of danger. But the doctor said that weeks must elapse before she could leave her bed.

A curious fact came next day in addition to the one of the night previous. Mr. Dearborn received a letter from his old friend, General Lee, who certainly was not dead, but in Mexico. It said—

“I shall be with you soon after the arrival of my letter. I must devise some punishment for your infidelity to the Bachelors’ Club, of which I am still the venerable president. That you should turn Benedict when I am so much your senior is vexatious. I shall see to you, depend on it.”

Three days after General Lee arrived in New York. He lost no time in calling on his friend Charles Dearborn. He had never even heard the name of his pseudo wife. The wretched woman was next day carried to the hospital. What became of her I never knew—and I am sure Charles Dearborn was equally in the dark respecting her. He became the most tender, watchful, and careful husband from that terrible evening when poison was dropped by that treacherous hand into the draught destined for our dear Ettie.

We never told the awful secret to Mrs. Dearborn. The letter and the arrival of General Lee made it unnecessary. She knew that Grace Illsley was a false woman—a pretender—an adventuress; and this was enough.

Mr. Dearborn was as tender a friend to me ever after as he was a devoted husband.

THE THUNDERBOLT.

It was during the month of January, 18—, that a party of hunters stood beneath a spreading oak, at the entrance of a deep forest, engaged in earnest conversation. From their excited actions it was plain to be seen that something more than common had happened, and the stern, resolute look of each man's face, the tightly compressed lips, and the flashing eyes, told plainly that they had been wronged; and woe to the person that had injured them; for they were men who had never let a misdeed or an injury go unrevenge.

The party were composed of five strong-looking fellows, arrayed in the green hunting-shirts, leather leggings, and moccasins, common in the Far West, and worn by all the hunters in that land of promise. Each man was armed with that never-absent friend, the rifle, besides having a brace of revolvers and a scalping-knife in his belt.

"I tell you what it is," said one, Harry Bell by name, who had removed from the East, with his young bride, about a year ago; "I tell you what it is; for the red devils burning myself and wife out of house and home, I swear eternal enmity to the whole race, and no matter where I may meet them, I will leave my mark on them."

"And I will swear with you!" "And I!" "And I!" spoke up all the hunters, with one voice; and their hands were cheerfully extended, and as cordially grasped, by that brave band of heroes—for heroes they were, having proved themselves as such in many an Indian fight.

"Well, comrades, you must come home with me to-night," said Will Wilson, "and I will show you a little

contrivance of mine, which you have never before seen ; in fact, nobody knows but myself of it, so come along." And the party turned to the north, tramping through the fresh-fallen snow.

A brisk walk of fifteen or twenty minutes served to bring them to the cabin of the hunter, and after carefully reconnoitring the vicinity, they entered the door, which was carefully closed after them.

The cabin was built of roughly-hewn logs, notched at the ends, so that they fitted closely together, and the cracks plastered up with mud, which had become hard as brick by being baked in the sun. The door and shutters were made of two-inch board, opening on the inside. The cabin was also surrounded by a palisade, made by driving posts firmly into the ground. We will now resume the thread of our story.

On entering the cabin the hunters were met by two of their companions, who had been left to guard the wife of Bell during the absence of their comrades. Bell instantly clasped his wife to his breast, quieting her fears the best he could ; telling her not to be alarmed, as there were no foes within a long distance of them ; that they had followed the Indians, but were unable to come up with them. Little did he think that these same foes were even then on their way to the home of the hunters.

"Now, comrades," exclaimed Will, seating himself, and drawing forth his pipe, filling and lighting it, "I will tell you about that little contrivance I spoke of in the woods this afternoon. You see, when I came to this place, I didn't build a log house the first thing, as all of you would have done, but I dug a deep cellar, as it were, about fifty or sixty feet from where I intended to build my house. I

then made a passage from the cellar to the one under the house, thus having two of them ; covering with logs and dirt that no one could have told that such a place existed. I then built this log house, and——”

The speaker was interrupted by the shrill war-whoop of the Indians ringing out on the cold air, like the shrieks of fallen angels. They who have listened to the yells of the “poor Indian” can form some idea of the surprise of the hunters, who supposed their foes were many miles distant ; but without displaying any terror, they seized their rifles, and stood awaiting the orders of Will.

“Now, boys,” said Will, “out with the lights, and then to the loop-holes, for we mustn’t give the devils any chance to rub us out, which we would if the lights were burning.”

These orders were obeyed, and the men silently took their places, well knowing that they had a wily and cunning foe to deal with ; a foe that never showed mercy to any man, woman, or child, that fell into their hands. Adepts they were, both in the use of the tomabawk and scalping-knife ; butchering and scalping, and often *burning alive*, the hapless victim of their savage ferocity.

“The fiends are within the palisade,” cried Will, at the same time discharging his rifle at a dusky group stealthily approaching the hut. A shrill shriek, followed by a fall and a moan, told plainly that one redskin had travelled his last war-path.

As there were seven men within the log hut, Will placed two men to each of the three sides, reserving the fourth to himself. This was the most easily approached from the outside, and Will soon found that he had enough to do, but he disdained to call for assistance, well knowing that

it would only weaken the other side, should one of the hunters respond to his call.

The hunter now observed a party of Indians creeping towards him, some sheltering themselves behind the trees, and others crawling on the ground. To fire was the work of an instant, but the Indian he aimed at was a moment too quick for him, and his bullet buried itself harmlessly in the tree behind which the Indian had taken refuge.

As the hunter was cursing his ill-luck, the crack of a rifle beside him caused him to turn quickly to discover the cause, and, to his surprise, he found Harry's wife coolly throwing down the still-smoking rifle which she had discharged, and taking up another, which she again fired. The Indians, supposing that there was but one man on this side, had grown reckless; but the two discharges in quick succession, and the death of two of their companions, showed them that they had more to deal with than they had imagined, and they did the best thing they could have done, — they retired beyond the reach of the deadly rifle.

"Why, Nellie!" exclaimed Will, "what induced you to expose yourself in this manner? What would your husband say if he saw you in this position?"

"Harry knows it, and gave me permission to do so," rejoined the heroine; "and can I remain inactive, and see you brave men perilling your lives for me and not raise an arm to help you? Thank Heaven! Harry taught me the use of the rifle when we first removed to this place, and now I can truly say there are few *men* who can fire with a more steady hand than I."

While these events were in progress, the defenders of the rest of the building were busily engaged in repelling the repeated assaults of the savages. On arriving at the

palisades, the Indians swarmed through the gateway, which, on account of the hunters supposing their enemies were not near, they had neglected to fasten. Announcing their joy at the oversight by whoops and yells, the savages divided into four parties, and attacked the house from four different directions. Finding they could make no impression on the gallant defenders, the chief withdrew with some of his principal braves, to devise some method of compelling the hunters to evacuate the cabin.

Some were in favour of a general assault from four quarters, drawing the fire of the hunters, and then rushing to the door and breaking it open with their tomahawks, before the whites had time to reload. Others condemned this plan as needlessly exposing themselves to danger, while, by piling up brush around the house, they might compel the hunters to make a sortie, and, as soon as they appeared, shoot them down. This plan appeared the best, and they determined to try it.

While the chief and his braves were in council, the other Indians had kept up an unceasing clatter, shouting and firing against the logs, hoping to divert the attention of the whites.

The noise they made did not deceive the hunters, and well knowing that something uncommon was about to be done, they had kept a sharp look-out; and when the chief had returned, the noise ceased and silence reigned, then it was the hunters knew the crisis had arrived.

"Now, boys," whispered Will, "you must not even wink, for I know that the redskins are bound to do some mischief."

"Here, Will! come—quick!" called out one of the men, and obedient to the call, Will hastened to the spot.

A single glance sufficed to apprise him of the nature of the new alarm. The danger appeared alarming enough. The Indians had rolled a snowball until it was as high as their heads, and were now engaged in rolling it towards the house, sheltering themselves behind it.

The ball, by being rolled by all the Indians, had increased in size, until it was as high as the top of the log-house, completely blocking up the side of the hut, so that no aim could be taken. It must not be supposed that the hunters were idle during the time the Indians were engaged in making the snowball, for a storm of bullets had been rained against them, but they were unavailing, burying themselves in the snow.

"Well! we're in for it now," exclaimed one of the men, as he leaned upon his rifle. "And the redskins will burn us out, for they are getting the brush against the house now!"

What he remarked was true, for the savages were piling armful after armful against the side of the house, and a painted Indian stooped down and lighted it in several places. But he paid dear for his act, for the powder-horn that he wore suspended across his shoulders fell into the fire and exploded, killing him and several of his companions, besides throwing the brush into the air. The brush was again collected, a new torch procured, and the fire started afresh.

This time the flames caught the side of the building, and the savages evinced their pleasure by dancing and yelling like demons. In fact, they seemed like the devils of Tartarus rejoicing over a lost soul.

During the fight the knowledge of the underground passage had not occurred to any one, and it is probable that

they would have been burned alive had not Nellie Bell suddenly remembered what Will had told, and exclaimed—

“Why, men, will you stay here and be roasted, when the place of safety is near? To the passage, men, and baffle the Indians.”

“She is right—we cannot remain here much longer!” cried one of the hunters. “And we must get Will to show us where the passage is.”

Will then proceeded to a corner of the hut, and lifted up several logs, displaying a cavity, into which he assisted Nellie.

The men then followed, and the roof was just about to fall, the Indians standing in a large group watching, as they supposed, the destruction of the whites.

Will, as soon as he retreated below, said—

“You are now in the first cellar, and before this gets too warm we must get rid of our foes. They are now standing right over the second cellar, within it I have stowed several kegs of powder, and now I intend to blow them up! Rather astonish them a little, won’t it?”

The heat had now become oppressive, and it was evident that unless some relief was obtained they would soon perish. Will saw this, and after telling them not to be alarmed, he lit a lantern, and passed through the passage into the other apartment.

Throwing down two or three kegs, he broke them open, and strewed the contents on the ground, placing the rest of the powder close to that which he had broken open; and then, filling his powder-horn, he returned to his companions, laying a train of powder after him.

“Get back as far as you can while I fire the train!” he

commanded, lighting a long stick and touching it to the powder.

It ignited, and the anxious eyes of all followed the flash far into the gloom. A report like the discharge of a thousand pieces of artillery followed, the shock throwing our friends stunned to the ground!

But if our friends were hurt a little, what must have been the surprise of the Indians to find themselves flying through the air? for they were standing over the mine, and in an instant two hundred of them were sent on their way to the "happy hunting-grounds."

When the hunters recovered their senses, and raised themselves above ground, a horrible sight met their eyes. Over two hundred mangled bodies, some without heads, and others with their legs or arms torn from their bodies, were lying about in every direction. The few that escaped were seen entering the forest, running with all their speed, occasionally turning their heads towards the scene of their disaster.

Pursuit was unavailing, and the hunters turned their attention towards subduing the flames. This was soon done, but the hunters found that the cabin would need considerable repairs before it would be fit for use.

The next day they went to work, burying the dead and repairing the log hut, which, before the week was over, was fit to call a habitation.

Harry and his wife, Nellie, were never again molested, and Will gained the name of the *Thunderbolt* from the survivors of the explosion, and as such he is known throughout all the West.

THE WILD HUNTER.

THE following story was related to me by a friend of mine, an old trapper, while we were sitting by a camp-fire on the plains, last summer. I will tell it, as near as I can, in his own words—

“It was several years since that I made the trip across these plains, of which I am about to tell you. We were a small party—only four families—consisting in all of twenty persons. Of these eight were males—four men and four sturdy boys. We did not apprehend any trouble from the Indians, or we would not have started, unless in a larger party. Still we were prepared; we had our trusty rifles and plenty of ammunition, and we were constantly on the watch for lurking foes of any kind.

“It was three weeks from the day we had left Kansas city, and were encamped within fifty miles of Bent’s Fort. It was our intention to follow up the Arkansas river to the fort, there cross over, and strike across to the Raton Mountains. Our destination was Santa Fé.

“Well, as I have said, we were encamped within fifty miles of the fort. We had eaten our supper, and the men folks were preparing for a smoke, when a singular apparition appeared before us. This was nothing more nor less than a little girl—a perfect stranger to our camp. You may imagine we were suprised.

“‘Where did she come from?’ was the question asked on every side, as everybody in the camp came crowding around our fire, where the little creature had first made her appearance.

“She looked almost starved, and so, before pressing her

with questions, I gave her something to eat. I tell you what, Will, if she didn't pile down the victuals, then it's a caution to all mankind. The crowd that was watching her didn't seem to discompose her in the least. Fried bufler meat, dessicated potatoes, corn-bread, and hot tea, disappeared like magic. I had no idea that such a little creature *could* eat so much ; but there must be an end to everything, and so in a little while she quit, and then gave us her history.

"She had the day before escaped from a party of Apache Indians. Two years before, the party of which she was a member had been massacred by them. She gave it as her firm belief that not a soul, except herself, escaped. Her father, mother, and two brothers, were killed. She alone was taken prisoner, and the relation of the sufferings she had undergone during that period caused us to shudder. On the day before she came into our camp she had availed herself of an opportunity to escape from her captors, and bare-footed and bare-headed, with no covering but a piece of blanket, she had wandered over the prairies ever since. She said it had been her intention to try and find the old Santa Fé road ; that once found, and she would be safe, for she knew that a great many people were continually passing to and fro over that great thoroughfare. Among these she thought she would surely find some one that would befriend her.

"She was not mistaken. My wife gave her some of little Mary's clothes, and told her to consider herself as one of the family from that hour. Her name she gave as Elmira Lockwood, and her age as ten years. Her family were from Massachusetts.

"Two days more we were at Brent's Fort. Here, after

a good deal of delay, we crossed the river, and took up our line of march for the Raton Mountains. On the third day after crossing the Arkansas we arrived at Little Animas river, at the eastern foot of the Raton Mountains. Here we laid over a day and then resumed our route.

"The road suddenly became rough and rocky. Stupendous crags rose on either side; tall pines, rising a hundred feet or more, stretched their tops apparently to the clouds; beautiful streams crossed the road at intervals, which were alive with fish; wood was plenty, and there was nice green grass on which to feed your animals. Taking it altogether, Will, I think it is the best route that can be travelled going to New Mexico.

"We had been in the mountains about six hours, when an exclamation from one of my companions attracted my attention. He pointed to some huge boulders off on our right. I followed the direction of his finger, and a curious object met my gaze. It was a man half naked and half covered with a bear skin, who stood upon one of the highest rocks, and was watching us as we went filing by. There was a wild, haggard look about him that made me tremble in spite of myself. He had a white, unshorn beard, which reached down below his breast. In his right hand he held a double-barrelled rifle, and in a rude belt about his waist were stuck a pair of Colt's revolvers and a hunting-knife.

"This singular personage was in sight but a few moments; with a wild cry, that seemed to proceed from nothing human, he vanished from sight. Several of us immediately started in pursuit, but we saw nothing more of him.

"Little Elmira was asleep in the waggon when this incident occurred. When she woke up and I had told her about it she turned pale.

“‘Oh, father,’ she said (she had learned to call me father), ‘the man you have seen must be the wild hunter.’”

“‘The wild hunter—and pray who is the wild hunter?’”

“‘Oh, father, he is a terrible being! The Apaches fear him more than they do the whole tribe of Navajoes.’”

“‘And why?’ I asked.

“She shuddered.

“‘He has taken over a hundred Apache scalps, and he always leaves a mark in the shape of a cross on their forehead.’”

“As the subject seemed to be distasteful to Elmira, no more was said at the time.

“Nothing more of importance occurred, until about three o’clock in the afternoon. A friend of mine, by the name of George Reynolds, and myself, were walking ahead of the waggons, when we came upon the dead bodies of two Apache Indians, who had a gash in the shape of a cross cut in their foreheads. I immediately recalled what Elmira had told me that forenoon, and which I there related to my companion.

“We proceeded to dig a grave, and were busy at it when the waggons came along. They all soon knew the story, and wondered what great wrong the wild man had suffered that he wreaked his vengeance upon those savages in so summary a manner. But we had no time to waste in suppositions; the night was drawing on, and we had yet to find a camping-ground; so hastily covering up the bodies we pushed on.”

The hunter paused. There was a look of sadness on his face which I could not account for; a nervous clutching of the fingers for which I could not account; but it was soon to come.

"That night," said he, with a faint tremour in his voice, "how shall I describe that night—that terrible night? It seems all before me now—that—but I must not anticipate.

"We were encamped in a deep canon, through which ran a beautiful stream. The night was dark and cloudy, and not a star was to be seen. We all went to bed pretty early, but our minds were too much engrossed with the incident of the morning to sleep. It was about ten o'clock, and I lay on my back thinking of the wild hunter and the two Apaches, when there arose such a wild, unearthly cry that it makes my blood curdle in my veins to even think of it.

"But that was not all. Simultaneous with the cry came a swarm of Apache Indians; and then—oh, my God!" cried the hunter, burying his face in his hands, "then came the slaughter. It is the same story repeated—that of an Indian massacre. But we fought 'em," cried the trapper, raising his head, while a triumphant gleam shone in his eye, "with the shrieks of our wives, and the cries of our little ones in our ears, we fought 'em. But all through that terrible fight I was not alone. When it first commenced I heard a hoarse shout by my side, and, turning, I beheld *the wild hunter!*

"I never saw anything on this earth fight like he did. In his right hand he carried a tomahawk, which, every time it descended, entered a red-skin's brain. In his left hand was his bowie, with which he branded them as fast as they fell. Oh, it was a terrible night."

The hunter was silent. In his own mind he seemed to be going through the same scenes over again. I pitied the poor man as he sat there gazing down among the coals with

such a tearful, pitiful expression upon his face. But I could not console him, and so I sat still, and kept silent, waiting until he should choose to re-commence the harrowing tale. He soon grew calm, and in a tone of voice a little less steady than before, he resumed—

“All of that once happy party were left dead on the ground, with the exception of two—little Elmira and myself. We were both taken prisoners, but I managed to escape before we had gone two miles. As for the wild hunter, he disappeared as soon as the fight was over—he went as mysteriously as he had come.

“After I had escaped from the savages, and was beyond pursuit, I sat down upon a large stone to think of what was best to do. Whither should I go? I was over one hundred miles from a settlement one way, and eighty-two the other. Even if I wished to walk the distance, what would I eat? I had no arms, not even a knife with which to kill game. You may imagine the fix I was in.

“I probably sat there an hour before I was determined on the course I should pursue. At the end of that time I arose and made my way to the scene of the late massacre. Everything was as we had left it. The first thing I did was to bury the bodies. The next, to find some food. The waggons were still there, but everything was taken out and carried away by the Indians, using our animals for that purpose. Finding I could get no food, I left the place and started after the Indians, who had taken a northerly direction. If any one then would have asked me what my purpose was, I could not have told them, for I had no fixed plan, no definite idea to go by.

“It was about four o'clock when I left the dreadful spot, and commenced my journey after the savages. I had a

pretty rough time, for I had a mighty bad road to travel over, up hill and down, crossing streams, and leaping over ravines; but I got through it all, and came out safe, although not without some scratches. After awhile it got dark, but an unerring instinct seemed to guide me, and I made my way along uninterruptedly, until about ten o'clock that night, when I came across something that stopped my progress.

"It was nothing more nor less than the Apache camp. It was in a kind of ravine or canon, situated a good deal like the one in which the massacre had taken place. The red villains were all seated around the fire, smoking. I was puzzled for a moment what to do, until I saw little Elmira seated off a little distance from the fire, at the root of a tree. My course was decided upon. I had come upon the camp from the entrance of the valley, and if possible I would leave it in that direction. But I would not leave it alone. I must have Elmira. Slowly and cautiously I dragged my way towards her. My greatest fear was that she might see me before I could get to her, and make my presence known by crying out. I had got nearly to her and was congratulating myself on the success of my plan, when the girl turned her head. I thought all was lost, but instead of running to the fire, as I supposed she would in case she saw me, she came right towards me. She had recognized me.

"The Indians heard her run, and looked up. They understood the whole matter at a glance, and bounding to their feet started to where I was. 'Now,' said I, 'neck or nuthin'!' and grabbing up Elmira, I started on a full run for the mouth of the valley, with about thirty of the red devils at my heels!

"After I reached the mouth of the canon I turned to the

right. In a little while I found myself in a canon smaller than the other, in the centre of which ran a small stream. I followed this stream, still carrying the girl in my arms. It was pitch dark, but that did not hinder me from knowing that the Indians were gaining upon me at every step ; add to this my alarm at discovering that the canon was getting narrower. The sides began to get more perpendicular ; and in a little while they rose straight as a wall on either side. It got narrower and narrower, until it was but ten feet wide.

“There was one point upon which I felt easy—the water was still there, and had to go out somewhere, and I hoped to get out at the same place. Things began to look serious. There were three Indians not more than thirty feet behind me, and gaining upon me at every step.

“It was while I was in this critical situation that I felt a strong arm put around me, and a voice say in a whisper—

“‘Don’t be afraid ! Come in here !’

“I ‘went in,’ whether I wanted to or not. I felt myself dragged through some bushes, heard the Indians as they rushed by, and—knew no more !

“When I returned to consciousness, I found myself in a cavern, and bending over the bed of furs on which I lay was the wild hunter !

“I was somewhat astonished at first, but after my strange companion had explained all to me, it did not appear so very singular. He had heard the shouts of my pursuers, and had stationed himself at the mouth of the cave to see what the matter was. He could just discern through the gloom and darkness a human figure coming towards him, pursued by the Indians. The rest I knew.

“When the hunter finished his tale, he asked me about

the girl that I had brought with me. I explained the singular manner in which the girl had first made her appearance. The hunter appeared to be deeply interested, and called the girl to his side.

“‘What’s your name, little one?’ asked this so-called wild man, but who in reality was as sane as I was.

“‘Elmira Lockwood, sir.’

“‘What were your parents’ names?’ asked the hunter quickly, grasping Elmira by the arm.

“‘Frederick and Dorothea, dear father.’

The “dear father” startled me, and I looked up. The wild hunter and little Elmira were locked in each other’s arms.

“The wild hunter’s history was as follows: After the massacre little Elmira had told me about, the savages had left him for dead; but after they left he came to, and managed to make his way to Bent’s fort, where he was taken care of until he got well, when he immediately left for the mountains, determined upon revenge. He supposed that his daughter was a prisoner in the hands of the Indians, and he had a faint hope of finding her, but as time passed on and he heard nothing of her, he concluded she was no longer in the land of the living.

“We stayed a week longer in the cavern; and then, one dark night, made our way to the Santa Fé Road, which we struck about daylight. Meeting no interruption, and making short stages, we arrived alive and well at Fort Union in the course of a week; from which place we soon found a way to get to the States.”

“And what did you do after that, Johnson?” I asked.

“Tell you that some other time,” answered Ben Johnson, his voice growing a little husky.

A REAL LIFE TRAGEDY.

"How are you, Fred, my boy? Where do you spend the season?" was the salutation and inquiry of my friend Charlie Clayton, as we met in Broadway one fine morning in June, 18—.

"Well, really, Charlie, I have not yet decided between the merits of Newport and Saratoga, and do not really know which place will be graced with the presence of my noted person."

"Are you then undecided?"

"I am."

"Allow me to decide for you then, and I shall render a decision in favour of Saratoga. Jeannie and myself start next Monday morning, and you must make one of our party. That will give you two days to arrange matters, and you can pack on Sunday—no harm for once, you know—and early Monday morning we will leave for the Springs."

Of course I assented, for I numbered Charlie among my most valued friends. He was one of your noble, generous, warm-hearted fellows; handsome, refined, and wealthy. A great "*catch*," he had eluded the vigilance of scheming mammas; and one year previous had married a poor but refined and beautiful girl, who loved him for himself, thereby causing much "table talk" among the disappointed young and ancient maidens of his set.

Jeannie Storrs, or perhaps we should say, Carlton, as she took the name of her uncle, with whom she resided at the time of her marriage with Charlie Clayton, was a lovely

girl. Not physical beauty alone, but a certain indescribable beauty of mind and disposition endeared her to all with whom she came in contact. She was eminently fitted to adorn the position bestowed upon her by Clayton. "But, Fred," he would say sometimes, when speaking to me of Jeannie, "but, Fred, she has one fault, if I may call it a fault—she does not possess the *warmth* I wish she did. She is most emphatically a daughter of the North. I wish she loved with the passionate fire of the women of the South."

I thought I detected a shade of regret on his handsome countenance, but it soon passed away.

On the following Monday we set out for Saratoga. A clear summer morning was one of the accompaniments of a ride through an extremely picturesque section of country, and we were in Albany, where we were to remain until the next morning. As we registered our names on the books of the American, I saw written in a bold, clear hand, "Miss Augusta Campbell, New York City." I knew Miss Campbell was a friend of the Claytons, and therefore pointed out the name to Charlie; he turned slightly pale, but turning, remarked—

"Good; she will make one of us, for I presume she is going to the Springs. Come with me to the parlour, I will give you an introduction."

Miss Augusta Campbell was a tall, elegant lady of twenty-two or three summers. To say she was *lovely* would be to speak tamely, and yet hers was not beauty. She was majestic—graceful—regal, and looked a perfect queen of passion. From a full, intelligent brow the heavy black hair was swept carelessly back and confined at the back in a silken network, interwoven with pearls. The

deep, black, almond-shaped eyes appeared volcanoes of passion; they would flash and sparkle with joy or indignation, or fill with moisture as the topics of conversation affected their owner. Those sparkling orbs of Augusta's were treacherous. Her complexion approached a brunette, her cheeks flushed with the faintest rose-colour, while her mouth, with its full pouting red lips, was perfectly enchanting—a mouth made for kissing. My pen is altogether too feeble to give descriptive justice to this charming—aye, more—fascinating creature. We were at Saratoga, and time was passing very pleasantly with us, when one morning, as I sat on the balcony of the C— House, Charlie drove up and I accepted his invitation for a ride, and seated myself by his side in the light buggy waggon, when we dashed off down the sandy road at a brisk trot. Charlie's beautiful "bays" were fast and we were soon riding through the forest. We rode some distance in silence, I enjoying my "Havana," Charlie occupied with his evidently not very pleasing cogitations. The horses gradually slackened their pace, and were soon walking lazily along, possibly surprised at the freedom accorded them by their master. At last, as I was on the point of breaking the long silence, Charlie looked up, and with a degree of earnestness that somewhat surprised me, inquired my opinion of Augusta Campbell.

"I think she is a dangerous woman, Charlie," I replied.

"Dangerous?"

"Yes; she would steal a poor fellow's heart, and then 'cut' him."

"Nonsense," replied Charlie. "I tell you, man, she is splendid—glorious—she is the Queen of Love. Oh, I could worship her!"

"Why, Charlie, are you insane?"

I was astonished at the vehemence of the man by my side.

"Has this Miss Campbell been using her arts of fascination on a married man who has heretofore sustained a reputation for strict honour and integrity, and who would sooner sever his right hand than commit a dishonourable act?" I said.

Charlie flushed, and then, as a shade of deep melancholy settled on his face, he said—

"Oh, Fred, I have done wrong in allowing her to occupy, for a single moment, a place in my memory. *She* is not to be blamed. I am the only one upon whom the slightest particle of blame can rest, but, Fred," he added, with great vehemence, "I *love* her—I adore her—I know it is wrong—aye, *sinful*, if you will, but I cannot help it; Jeannie is a good girl, but she is so cold, while Augusta is all love and fire and passion. *What shall I do?* I see nothing, I know nothing, but Augusta. Wherever I go I seem to see her; she is ever present in my thoughts, and I cannot rid myself of this feeling of enchantment."

"Charlie," I said, "you must leave this place; return to New York, and in the turmoil of business forget her. Leave this place *at once*—to-day. As you value your happiness, go! If you love your wife, go! before the syren that now laughingly binds with silken cords forges chains no human arm can rend. Go, I say, and save yourself ere it be too late."

"I will obey you, Fred. You speak truly; you are a true friend. I will, at least, *try* to follow your injunctions."

I received a telegram that evening requiring my immediate presence in New York, and left Saratoga on the evening train. I found, on my arrival here, that it would be necessary for me to go to Washington, and therefore I

heard nothing from Charlie until I returned to the city, when, upon enquiring of a mutual friend, I learned to my horror that he had eloped with Augusta Campbell, and no tidings could be heard respecting them. He had placed at the disposal of his wife the brown stone house, and all its magnificent surroundings, together with an order on his banker for fifty thousand dollars. *This* was a shadow of his former generosity, but could *money* heal the wounded heart of Jeannie Clayton? Far from it. The injured wife felt keenly the great wrong that had been done her, but her woman's heart yet clung to the memory of the man who once was proud to call her his own. She prayed for him. She watched for some tidings from him, and though counselled by her friends to procure a divorce, she refused, saying—"If Charlie comes home repentant I will forgive. It is not my province to judge harshly. Charlie was a noble, open-hearted man, susceptible to every influence, and *she* fascinated him so far as to cause him to forget, for a moment, his humble wife. *She* was brilliant; I am plain. That is the difference. Charlie was dazzled, and became an easy victim."

Thus she reasoned.

A year passed, and nothing had been heard from Charlie. I was sitting in the reading-room of the St. Charles House, in New Orleans, one evening, when an acquaintance of mine entered, and sitting down on the sofa by my side asked if I had heard the news.

"What news?" I inquired.

"Why, haven't you heard? The murder in — Place. A woman has murdered her husband, and then taken her own life, or rather, I should say, *attempted* the murder of her husband, for I believe *he* is still alive, while *she* was dead when they found her. Everybody is talking

about it, and I thought you had surely heard of it before this."

I replied that I had not, and inquired the names of the parties.

"De Lacy," was the reply; "the richest people in the city."

"Is it possible! Why, what is the cause of the tragedy?"

"Oh, *jealousy*, I believe," answered my friend. "But suppose we walk out and see the house, and perhaps we can see the persons themselves. I believe they admit a few into the house."

We went out and soon reached the place, a large mansion, elegant without, and, having obtained an entrance, we found Oriental magnificence within. Superb furniture, velvet carpets, golden chandeliers and candelabra, exquisite paintings and statuary, marked this abode of wealth and splendid ease. We were ushered into the room where the corpse of the woman lay. As the attendant raised the covering from the face I started, for there, beautiful in death, lay Augusta Campbell. I was obliged to support myself, for a moment, by laying my hand on the back of a sofa, but, soon recovering, I asked, in as calm a voice as I possibly could, to see Mr. De Lacy.

"Sartin, massa," said the negro servant, "but, bress you, sah, de doctah say dat no pnsson be 'lowed up dere."

"I can't help it," I replied; "he is my friend; I must see him."

"If you wish to see Mr. De Lacy, sir, you may come with me," said an elderly gentleman at this moment, stepping in the door.

He was the physician. I followed him to the room where the injured man lay. What my sensations were can be

imagined, for I knew I should see my old friend Clayton. We entered the room, and there on the bed lay Charlie, pale and still.

"He sleeps," said the doctor. "Let us retire until he awakens ; he is not so dangerous as was at first supposed, and I think he will soon recover."

My meeting with Charlie was somewhat painful, but he had suffered much, and was very penitent. A letter found on the person of Augusta gave the following facts. Charlie had lately become quite melancholy, often speaking of his wife, and regretting the step he had in a weak moment taken. She had become jealous, and determined that they should die together. Full of this purpose she rose earlier than usual one morning, and after, as she thought, stabbing Charlie to the heart, she plunged the dagger into her own bosom, thus becoming a victim to her own evil nature. I watched over Charlie until he had entirely recovered, and then came North with him. He met his deeply injured wife, and, in terms the most penitent, begged her forgiveness for the great wrong he had done. She, with the warm, trusting heart of woman, freely accorded her forgiveness, and in after years Charlie looked with sorrow back on the one blot on the otherwise fair pages of his life's history.

They removed to a distant part of the State, where they are spending the remainder of their lives in striving to make each other, and all who associate with them, happy. Do not, my dear reader, censure Jeannie Clayton for receiving her husband again with love and forgiveness, for we are all human, and you know, "*To err is human ; to forgive divine.*"

THE GREAT SNOW-STORM.

GRANDMOTHER POTTER sat in her large cushioned rocking-chair, in the corner nearest the fire, knitting industriously upon a stocking, for the foot of some one of her grandchildren in the room.

The children were kneeling in the chairs before the window, looking out at the fast-falling snow, giving vent to their childish glee in joyous exclamations. At last one little fellow named Eddy, the youngest of them all, turned to his grandmother, and in childish simplicity asked—

“Did you *ever* see it snow so, in all your life, gram'ma?”

The good old lady dropped her knitting, and looked out at the storm, after which she replied.

“Yes, a good deal harder, and undoubtedly longer than this will last.”

“When was that?” was asked by one of the group.

“A good many years ago, when your grandfather was alive.”

“Oh, please tell us all about it—how long it snowed, and how deep?” pleaded one of them, a desire which was echoed by the rest by cries of, “Oh, yes, yes, please do!” and to further urge their cause, they gathered around her, and looked enquiringly up into her face.

Their entreaties were not to be disregarded, therefore their grandmother bade them bring their little chairs and stools up beside and around her, and she would tell them all about it. This they cheerfully did. While they were thus engaged, she put away her knitting, and took little Eddy upon her knee.

The children became seated, and were very still. She sat for several moments in a deep study, and then commenced—

“I scarcely know how to commence. Your grandfather was named George Potter. After we were married we left the East and went out West, away off to the unsettled country, where scarcely any white men lived, and where the Indians and the ferocious animals roam. Right in the middle of a great forest we built a log cabin, and then began to cut down the big trees, and prepare the adjoining lands for cultivation. Out there we did not consider the wood of value, as there were such large quantities all about us to be had for the cutting, so the wood was piled up and burnt, the ashes helping to enrich the land. This was early in the spring. Grandfather put in what seed he could among the stumps, and then he set about building a barn for our stock, which he had bought at a settlement.

“At first, I lived in great fear, and could scarce go out of doors without being in fear of being pounced upon by some Indian or animal; but this did not last long—the demeanour of my husband gave me confidence, and, after a while, I felt no more afraid of danger to my person than I would here.

“Thus in repose we lived undisturbed by the Indians; and as for the bears, a few of which I had seen, I always found they ran equally as fast away from me as I did from them. For the panther and the wolf I cared nothing, as they only howled in the night, and they could not get at our stock, which was secure in the barn.

“The summer passed without anything noteworthy occurring. In the fall our little crop was gathered in and safely deposited in the cabin and barn for future use.

Winter came on in due time, with its chilly blasts, snow, ice, and storms, but the little cabin was strong and warm, and the logs were piled into the fire-place, making rousing fires.

"It was in the middle of February, clear and cold, with bare ground, scarce a mite of snow or ice to be seen, when it became necessary for your grandfather to visit the nearest settlement, a distance of sixty miles, for the purpose of procuring family supplies, the want of which we had felt for several weeks. The time seemed favourable, and no signs of an approaching storm were to be seen. Early in the morning, before light, he rose and mounted his horse, an empty saddle-bag swung across behind him, in which to bring back the articles. It was his intention to make the whole distance before dark, as there was no half-way house, before reaching the settlement, and he did not wish to spend a night on the frozen ground. The next day he would make his purchases, the horse in the meantime resting, and on the succeeding one return.

"This was the first time during our residence in the forest that he was about to leave me alone, and it made me melancholy. To be sure I was not altogether alone, for I had my infant, but I missed his company, and knew that as long as he was with me I should receive the protection of his strong arm to the last extremity.

"During the forenoon I tried to occupy my mind by work, and attention to my child and household duties. From time to time I swept the heavens with my eyes, as I felt forebodings in regard to the weather. Later in the day the sky was overcast with clouds, and it began to snow, at first now and then a flake that did not seem to reach the ground, or was lost apparently on the field of

brown earth. As the hours passed away the storm grew in strength, and when I retired for the night it was snowing fast. I drew my babe close to me and tried to sleep, but my busy thoughts would not allow it. Thus passed one of the most miserable nights of my existence. I tried to be calm and resigned, but could not. I only lay there and imagined the worst, for I feared that he would not be able to reach the settlement before dark, and might be obliged to pass a night without shelter, or, what I worse feared, lose his way on the untravelled prairie and perish in the storm.

“Morning came at last, although it seemed to me that it never would, and I looked in vain for any favourable change in the weather. It snowed without cessation, and was bitter cold. I had a good stock of wood within, and was able to keep warm. There was nothing that required my attention without, except the watering and feeding of the stock in the barn, which I performed.

“This day passed away like the preceding one. When night set in, the wind arose, and it seemed to snow with renewed violence. This was what I had most dreaded, for I well knew that if the wind blew, that the snow would drift and make the matter still worse.

“All night long I lay and listened to the shrieking wind as it waved through the forest and around the cabin, which it fairly shook to the base, threatening to unroof it or demolish it altogether; but it was well built and stood out the gale. On awakening in the morning, I saw the great banks of snow around the cabin piled up so high that they almost shut out the light. I deferred attending to the stock in the barn, for I knew that when I opened the door, the great bank of snow which rested against it would pile into the room, and occasion me much trouble.

"Snow, snow—nothing but snow! not a bit of sky or anything to be seen save a descending white mass. About the middle of the afternoon, after listening for several hours to the pitiful bleats and lows of the dumb animals in the barn, who were in want of water and food, not able to withstand their appeals long, I determined upon relieving them. I put the baby in the cradle, and struggled through the deep and drifted snow to the barn. The poor, dumb creatures betokened their joy as best they could, and I felt well rewarded for my labour. After providing for them I started on my way back to the cabin. When I reached the door I saw, to my horror, a great footstep in the snow. It seemed as though every drop of blood in my veins was chilled. I could scarce stand up from affright. I thought of my helpless infant—all a mother's love was aroused. I had no fear of danger then. I pushed the door open boldly and entered. At a glance I saw before me such a scene that it transfixed me. There, in front of the fire-place, seated in my chair, sat an athletic savage, dandling on his knee my baby, he seeming delighted with his charge, while she laughed and crowed, having little thought of fear.

"He turned in his seat, and intuitively understood my feelings, and in broken language said—

" ' Be no afraid—me no hurt ; cold, hungry, freeze, starve, ugh ! ' and he shuddered at the idea.

"At this assurance I ventured to approach the fire. At this he seemed well pleased and continued—

" ' Me Thunder Cloud ; great king of his nation ; get lost way from warriors ; storm come on, ugh ! ' "

"I still advanced towards the fire-place, and reached out my hand to take the infant.

" ' Please no, ' he pleaded, ' Thunder Cloud woman now,

child, no hurt anybody—Great Spirit's big storm, big cold, make 'fraid.'

"I seated myself before the fire, regarding my savage visitor askance.

"'Me hungry—poor Indian,' he said, in a tone that showed how dependent he was in his position.

"I arose and set some food before him, which he ate voraciously, apparently having undergone a long fast. During this time he gave up the infant to me, but the moment he finished eating he held out his arms to receive it again. I was loth to return it, but he looked up with such an expression that I gave it to him; and there he sat the whole afternoon, before the fire-place, dandling my child upon his knee, and then tossing it up and down with his strong arms until it was tired out by the violent exercise, and sank to sleep upon his breast. Little did the innocent babe realize the nature of the man in whose arms it reposed.

"When it came time for the stock to be fed and bedded down for the night, he arose and performed it, and seemed well repaid in receiving my thanks.

"At the hour of retiring, he said, pointing with his finger.

"'Me lay by fire 'night.'

"I brought him out from my great chest a blanket to lay upon; he gave me his knife as a token of his good intentions, and then spreading the blanket on the floor before the fire, he laid down prepared to sleep.

"I sought my room with my child, fastened the door securely, and went to bed. For a time my feelings were conflicting, and, after deliberation, argued it in this way—

"Here I am, alone in this cabin, save under this roof is

my helpless infant and an Indian, the known foe of the white man. Still he is unarmed; I have his knife; the door is well fastened; he cannot injure me without burning the cabin down over my head; but this would be preposterous, as he was for the time being as much dependent upon its shelter as I.

"When I had arrived thus far in my soliloquy the stillness in the kitchen was broken by a series of snores that showed that my visitor was sleeping. Without waiting to arrive at further philosophical conclusions, I sank to sleep; and, although I awoke several times during the night, I secured a good deal of rest.

"Well, Thunder Cloud stayed to breakfast, to dinner, and to supper; in return, taking care of the dumb creatures in the barn. This day it snowed ordinarily, not as it had done before, and I began to take courage that it would soon cease. Although I began to feel a degree of confidence in the Indian, I could not but wish that he would leave. This very thought served to keep me from being in constant distress in regard to my husband. That night there was a change in the atmosphere—a warmth and dampness; a drizzling rain followed for several days; I forget how many; I was so anxious for the return of your grandfather that I lost all record of the time. At last it cleared off cold, freezing everything without. As soon as this change took place the Indian asked for his knife, saying in his guttural tones—

"'Mus' go.'

"I gave him the knife and the blanket which he had used, together with a quantity of provisions. With my presents he appeared delighted. He took the baby in his arms, kissed it as he had seen me doing during his stay, and then,

as he turned to go, he took one of my hands in his and said—

“ ‘*Me go now ; Thunder Cloud never forget !*’ ”

“ He hurried away, and in a few moments was out of sight.

“ In a few days your grandfather returned. To have attempted to make the journey during the snow-storm would have been madness, and as it was followed by rain, as I have told you, the rising of the streams, if nothing else, would not allow his return. I told him of my strange visitor. He was surprised at his conduct, for, said he, ‘ That Indian is notorious for brutality, and has long been a terror to all the whites upon this border.’ ”

“ In time we forgot almost of the strange visitor. During the following autumn news came to our ears of an attack upon the settlement by Thunder Cloud and his tribe. This we learned from a fleeing settler, who had witnessed the butchery of his whole family, and barely escaped with his life. The sight of the burning cabins, the din of fire-arms, and the cries of the savages and sufferers, who were falling beneath their tomahawks, urged him on. He entreated my husband to have us join him in his flight, but he would not consent. His theory was, that the Indians, once having a taste of blood, savage beasts as they were, would continue on to adjoining settlements, until their career was stopped by large bodies of whites, who would most assuredly arise. Not looking at the matter in this light, the terrified settler continued in his flight.

“ The following week was one of great anxiety to us. It was Saturday ; the sun was just setting ; your grandfather was fastening up the barn for the night, and I was just outside of the cabin, with the child in my arms, when, without a second's warning, a score of war-painted savages burst

from the wood directly in front of me. I cried to my husband, who, perceiving the savages, started upon a run towards the cabin. A number of Indians appearing from behind the barn, secured him before he had performed half the distance, and at the same moment I was seized from behind by a great Indian, while another wrenched my child from my arms with a violence that endangered its life.

“What a tableau of horror to behold! I cannot describe my feelings to you. Just imagine yourself held securely by an Indian, your child hanging by one little limb, dangling beside another fiend before your eyes, a malicious smile lighting up his dark, paint-bedaubed face, while a group of demons are crowded around your husband.

“At this stage of affairs there rushed from the woods, and across the clearing, a giant savage, wearing the plumes of a chief, in his war lock. He shouted an angry exclamation in the Indian tongue, whereupon we were all released. I saw at once, by the scowls upon their faces, that they were not well pleased with the command. He waved them to the right and left with a haughty disdain, and came directly toward me.

“‘Good heavens!’ I exclaimed, in thought, ‘are we to be spared for tortures worse than immediate death?’

“The chief, whom all seemed to fear and obey, stood before me, looked at me for a moment, and then said, in broken English—

“‘I am *Thunder Cloud*. The great chief is upon the war trail. The cry is blood! His braves would slay all of your people alike, but the Indian recollects the great snow-storm and the kindness done him by the pale-face squaw. Good bye!’

“He shook my hand, turned to his warriors and braves

and harangued them in their native tongue, and then they swept on through the forest, as he was about to enter it, and became lost to view. He waved his hand in token of farewell, and I never saw him more.

“In a few hours a band of whites came on in hot pursuit, and, as I afterwards learned, overtook the Indians, whereupon a decisive struggle took place, and among those that fell in a hand-to-hand conflict with a great Indian fighter was my ever-to-be-remembered benefactor, Thunder Cloud.”

BURNT AT THE STAKE; OR, THE SETTLER'S VENGEANCE.

THE early settlers of that part of New Hampshire lying around about Dover passed through many a trying ordeal before they secured their homes from the grasp of the red men, who looked upon them as their natural enemies, and whom, they thought, it was their duty as well as their interest to drive from the foothold they had gained upon the banks of the Cocheco. This hate was intensified by the ill-usage of the whites, a portion of whom seemed to be of the opinion that the savages had no rights that they were bound to respect, and, acting upon this principle, cheated them in every possible manner.

These feelings on both sides produced the natural consequences, and one settler after another fell beneath the tomahawk and scalping knife, until the great outbreak occurred which resulted in the destruction of most of the settlement, including the capture of the garrisons, and the death of Major Waldron, all of which is too well known to need repeating here.

The events that we are about to relate occurred a year prior to this disastrous time, and we will at once proceed to the narration of the story, which although it did not possess importance enough to be recorded in history, has been handed down through successive generations, and to this day the story is told, and the place pointed out, by the descendants of those who took part in the affray.

Richard Hayes was the first man to leave the settlement at Dover, and follow the course of the river some ten miles, and there build his cabin in the heart of the forest,

cutting himself loose, as it were, from all connection with the whites as far as protection was concerned, as they were too far removed to be of any benefit in case he should be attacked by the Indians.

In vain his friends had tried to dissuade him from this rash movement. His only answer was that he did not fear the Indians; he had never harmed them, and until he did, he had no fear of their molesting him. The spot he had selected suited him better than any he could obtain nearer the settlement; so, despite all warning, he made a clearing on the banks of the river, built him a comfortable cabin, and, with his wife and child, took possession of it, and sojourned for upwards of a year in peace and quietness, treating the Indians, who often came there, with the utmost kindness, and he believed himself located in as safe a position as though they were living within a stone's throw of the garrison. But a rude awakening came at last, though too late. The thunderbolt had fallen when the sky was without a cloud, and the happiness of the pioneer was gone for ever.

One morning late in October he had taken his rifle, and bidding his wife good-bye, went to the settlement, with the intention of returning a little past noon, but that time had long gone by before he set out on his return, accompanied by two friends whom he had prevailed upon to attend him home and go hunting with him the next day. They could not leave so soon as they wished, so he waited for them, knowing, however, that his wife would be anxiously expecting his return.

With merry jest and lively conversation they took their way up the river, which, on either side was overhung by dark forest trees, so dense in some places that the water

could hardly be seen a few feet from the bank. Now and then a water fowl, startled from its fancied security, would spread its wings to seek safety in flight, but was brought down by the unerring rifle of the settlers, who, by the time they were in the neighbourhood of the cabin, had secured game enough for their supper and breakfast, which they knew could be "done to a turn" by Mrs. Hayes.

"Can't you smell smoke, boys?" exclaimed Dick Hayes, as he was familiarly called by his companions, stopping and snuffing the air when they had approached to within three-quarters of a mile of the cabin.

"It seems to me that I do. Perhaps some one is burning a brush heap down to the settlement," returned Sam Wiggins, who was a little in advance of his companions.

"That can't be the case, Sam, for don't you see that the wind is from the north, and would blow it in the other direction? I'm afraid that there is trouble at home."

"Don't be frightened, Dick. I guess that your wife and boy are all right. The smoke, if it does not come up the river, may come from a fire set by the Indians somewhere in the forest," said Bill Henderson, who had been turning his nose in every direction, scenting the smoke that every moment became denser in the forest about them.

"I have never felt so uneasy about them when I have been away as I do to-day. Yet, for my life I can't tell the reason why. And the first moment I perceived this smoke, I could not help thinking that it came from my burning cabin. Let us hurry on, and in ten minutes we shall know if harm has come to my wife and child."

The three men passed swiftly along through the forest, and neither of them spoke, though as they advanced the smoke became so dense that it was almost suffocating, and

could be seen pouring through the trees in a thick volume. They were no longer in doubt about the smoke being above them.

The heart of the settler sank within him as they neared the opening. What should he see? His wife and child murdered, and his cabin in flames, or would all be in peace and quietness as he had left them that morning? A moment more and the worst would be known.

Upon the edge of the clearing they stood at last, and, with a cry of agony, the settler and his companions saw that their worst fears were realized.

The cabin he had left that morning was now a mass of smouldering ruins, from which the black smoke came up as from a funeral pyre.

With a cry of despair Richard Hayes sprang forward in the direction of the fire, followed closely by his companions. Not a word was spoken by them, for they knew that they could say nothing to comfort the husband and father. There might yet be hope, but they feared the worst.

When within a dozen rods of the burning cabin, Richard Hayes suddenly paused, and stood as if formed of stone for a moment, and the next he was kneeling by the side of the dead body of his son, which was lying in a little hollow, with the head split in twain by the murderous blow of a tomahawk, and the scalping-knife had carried away the bright curls that had often been his delight to toy with as he lay in his arms. It was a sight that would have caused the hardest heart to melt, and a tear stood in the eyes of the two men as they gazed upon the scene before them.

For a moment the settler bent over the body of his murdered son, and then he gently raised the inanimate form in his arms, and approached the pile of glowing embers.

There was yet another to find. And each moment they expected to gaze upon the dead form of the wife and mother, unless the fiends had, as a climax to their terrible work, thrown her into the flames of the burning cabin.

Tenderly placing the form of his murdered son upon the ground, Richard Hayes looked in vain for any trace of his wife, and it was nearly half an hour before any clue to her whereabouts was discovered.

Bill Henderson, becoming tired of the search about the cabin, had gone to the edge of the forest, and came back,—exclaiming, with a look of joy upon his face—

“Your wife is alive, Dick! The red-skins have carried her away with them. I found their trail on the outskirts of the forest, and there are the footsteps of a woman along with theirs. Cheer up, for, bad as it is, it might have been worse.”

A ray of hope appeared in the face of the settler for a moment. It brought joy to his heart to know that his wife was alive, although she was in the hands of the savages, and unless she was rescued therefrom, her fate would be worse than though she had perished with her child.

The look of relief faded from his face as his eyes again fell upon the form of his darling boy, and a look of vengeance overspread his features.

“Help me to place the body of my boy where no harm can come to it in our absence. Work quickly, for we have not a moment to lose. We must be on the trail in ten minutes from now.”

Quickly the two men obeyed his bidding, and in a very few moments a shallow grave was scooped out, in which the father tenderly laid the form of his boy, and then stood with folded arms while they heaped the soil above it.

"Here let him rest. Now for vengeance and the rescue!"

Not another word was spoken until they reached the edge of the forest at the point where the trail had been discovered, and where it could now be plainly traced by all. A close examination showed that the party who had committed the outrage was very small, not numbering more than four or five, and perhaps not even so many as this. They had been at no pains to conceal their footprints, and among them the settler could plainly trace that of a woman, and which he had no doubt was that of his wife.

In silence the three men went on their errand of love and vengeance combined. Not a word passed between them, save when it was necessary at some point in the trail, when it required all their judgment, as the darkness came on, to determine which way the Indians had gone with their prisoner.

The afternoon sun went down; the twilight disappeared, and darkness reigned in the forest. Their progress now was slow in the extreme, the trail was so difficult to follow. But as yet, the savages had kept close to the bank of the river. This helped them much, for they could pass over a distance of half a mile without trying to keep the trail, and then would spend a few moments in search for it, to be assured that they were right.

Deeper and deeper grew the tangled forest on the river's bank, and darker became the night around them. With the going down of the sun, clouds had begun to spread over the sky, and now, so thick a pall hung above them, that the light of the stars was completely blotted out. Darkness was in their hearts, above their heads, and around upon every side.

"Look!" exclaimed Bill Henderson, who was in advance,

when the night had wore on so that it lacked not more than an hour of midnight. "Is not that the light of a camp-fire that glimmers through the trees?"

His two companions looked in the direction indicated, and saw that he was not mistaken. A faint light was shining through the trees, and they knew that the hour of their struggle for vengeance had come.

With the utmost caution they crept on. The light amid the trees grew larger and larger, and a little further onward and they would be enabled to see the number of their foes, and mayhap get a glimpse of their captive.

With noiseless footsteps they neared the encampment of the Indians, and when, at last, they could see what was passing around it, they saw a sight that caused their blood to run cold, and rendered them almost for the moment incapable of action.

Tied to a small tree, with dry fagots heaped almost to her shoulders, stood Mrs. Hayes, while a huge, painted savage stood close beside her, with a blazing torch in his hand, which he was waving above his head, and making motions as if about to set the pile on fire, apparently for the purpose of tantalizing his victim, who, with her face turned upward, seemed to be engaged in prayer. Standing a little aside were three other savages, apparently watching the motions of their companion with great delight.

"Take aim, with me, at those three standing there. He with the torch must be left for me!" whispered Richard Hayes, and the next moment the simultaneous discharge of three rifles rang through the forest, and so unerring had been the aim that each bullet had done its work, and with a wild cry the three savages fell to the earth to rise no more.

For a moment the remaining savage stood as if spellbound

at the fate of his companions, and then, with a shout of defiance, he flung the torch among the dry fagots. That act was the last voluntary one he ever made, for the next moment he was thrown to the ground by the united efforts of Richard Hayes' two companions, while he tore the blazing fagots from about his wife, cut loose her bonds, and folded her to his arms with a devout thankfulness that she was again restored to him. His errand of love was over—now came vengeance.

“Bind him to the stake!” exclaimed the settler, and his companions at once obeyed.

The wood was piled around him, and without a thought of mercy, the torch applied.

They stopped not to see the end, but wended their way homewards, leaving him to his fate. Thus was the settler's vengeance accomplished

THE END.

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